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ABSTRACT

This monograph is designed to provide a blueprint to educators on how to improve academic advising for first-year college students. Seventeen chapters are: (1) "First-Year Students: The Year 2000" (Wesley Habley); (2) "Insights from Theory: Understanding First-Year Student Development" (M. Lee Upcraft); (3) "Creating Successful Transitions Through Academic Advising" (Eric R. White and others); (4) "Organizing and Delivering Academic Advising for First-Year Students" (Margaret C. King and Thomas J. Kerr); (5) "Using Information Technology to Enhance First-Year Student Advising" (Gary L. Kramer); (6) "Advising Alliances: Faculty and First-Year Students Team Up for Success" (Susan H. Frost); (7) "Faculty Mentoring: A Key to First-Year Student Success" (Gary L. Kramer and others); (8) "Selecting, Training, Rewarding, and Recognizing Faculty Advisors" (Robert E. Glennen and Faye N. Vowell); (9) "Reach-Out Advising Strategies for First-Year Students" (Derrell Hart); (10) "Academic Advising Through Learning Communities: Bridging the Academic-Social Divide" (Anne Goodsell Love and Vincent Tinto); (11) "Advising First-Year Undecided Students" (Virginia Gordon); (12) "Advising Underprepared First-Year Students" (Nancy Gray Spann and others); (13) "Advising and Orientation Programs for Entering Adult Students" (Elizabeth G. Creamer and others); (14) "Pluralistic Advising: Facilitating the Development and Achievement of First-Year Students of Color" (Thomas Brown and Mario Rivas); (15) "Assessment of Academic Advising" (M. Lee Upcraft and others); (16) "Academic Advising: A Compendium of Evaluation Instruments" (Debra S. Srebnik and Jennifer Stevenson); and (17) "Perspectives on Academic Advising for First-Year Students: Present and Future" (John N. Gardner). Three appendixes provide a statement of core values of academic advising, a taxonomy of advising services, and an annotated bibliography. Each chapter contains a reference list. (MDM)

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NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR THE FRESHMAN YEAR EXPERIENCE & STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

NATIONAL ACADEMIC ADVISING ASSOCIATION

*Monograph Series*
*Number 18*

# FIRST-YEAR ACADEMIC ADVISING:

## PATTERNS IN THE PRESENT, PATHWAYS TO THE FUTURE

*M. Lee Upcraft & Gary L. Kramer, Editors*

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*University of South Carolina, 1995*

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# First-Year Academic Advising:

## Patterns in the Present, Pathways to the Future

*M. Lee Upcraft & Gary L. Kramer, Editors*

*National Resource Center for*
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*University of South Carolina, 1995*

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# FOREWORD

In an era of unprecedented higher education instability, when so many aspects of the collegiate world as we once knew it are no longer the same, one certainty remains — there are always going to be new first-year students arriving on our campuses each term. The authors and editors of this monograph firmly believe that no mission is more vital to the success of higher education than insuring the initial success of new university and college students. Therefore, this monograph is dedicated to enhancing new student learning, success, satisfaction, retention, and, ultimately, graduation. We also accept as our fundamental premise that once we have insured outstanding classroom instruction for new students, nothing is more important to their immediate and long-term success than outstanding academic advisement.

This monograph is designed to provide a blueprint for all higher educators—from the novice to the veteran advisor, from new assistant professors to the presidents of our colleges and universities—on how to improve academic advising for first-year students. Academic advisors have long known what college presidents and other policy makers are learning: there is a wealth of important empirically-based research which has found a significant correlation between quality academic advisement, student satisfaction, and enhanced persistence and graduation. Those involved in the production of this monograph want to make sure of such outcomes, not by serendipity, but through deliberate planning and implementation of effective first-year student advising.

This monograph has been produced as a result of the unique collaboration between two organizations, which combined have approximately 30 years of experience directed towards the improvement of undergraduate education. It was our hope to provide the latest and most progressive thinking on academic advising and, especially, to provide a guide for campus policy makers and leaders to enable these people to bring about important and bold changes on campuses by improving academic advisement of first-year students.

Educators involved in both organizations believe that our cooperative effort blazes a trail for the kind of new partnerships which need to be developed on our campuses in the name of improving academic advising and, hence, learning and student success. We invite your careful reading of this monograph, and we especially urge you to call to the attention of leaders on your campus the recommendations within this document. The ideas in this monograph represent the very best thinking on this critical topic of improving academic advising for new college students. We deeply appreciate the interest of the readership in this important subject which has so powerfully brought our two organizations together.

June, 1995

John N. Gardner, Director, National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition

Tom Kerr, President, National Academic Advising Association

# Notes from the Editors

M. Lee Upcraft & Gary L. Kramer

*First-Year Academic Advising: Patterns in the Present, Pathways to the Future* represents the collaboration between the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition. From the initial discussion through the final production, the working and professional relationship between NACADA and the National Resource Center continues to be an asset to both organizations.

We believe this comprehensive monograph on academic advising fills a major gap in the current literature of higher education because it focuses on the first-year student. This monograph provides insights into all aspects of student-centered academic advising, within the context of the entire academic community (See Appendix A). It is a rich blend of the theoretical and the practical, written by practitioners who have "frontline" knowledge and experience, resulting in a useful handbook and resource for higher educators.

Writing a monograph about first-year student advising does, however, present a few dilemmas. The first is that not all first-year students with unique needs could be included, so we had to make some difficult decisions. In the end, we decided to offer undecided students, underprepared students, adult learners, and students of color as examples of the increased diversity of today's students. In no way does this decision indicate that we are less concerned about other entering students with unique needs, such as disabled students, student athletes, part-time students, students with different sexual orientations, or others.

The reader will also note that, whenever possible, the terms "first-year student" or "entering student" are used instead of "freshman." While the latter term does have some popular appeal, it does not accurately describe today's increasingly diverse student population. Students entering college today are not necessarily "fresh" (connoting "fresh" from high school), and they are certainly not all "men" (since a majority of today's students are women).

Of course, there are probably as many definitions of academic advising as there are academic advisors. In this monograph, we are discussing any

effort to assist students in planning and implementing their academic plans. Kramer, Chynoweth, Jensen, and Taylor (1987) provide a more comprehensive definition which matches entering student needs with appropriate academic advising, from pre-enrollment to the end of the first year (See Appendix B). For readers unfamiliar with academic advising, consulting Appendix B before reading this monograph will help familiarize them with what a comprehensive academic advising program is all about.

This monograph provides information and direction for anyone interested in helping first-year students make a successful transition to college. Presidents, chief academic officers, department chairs, faculty, enrollment managers, freshman seminar instructors, professional academic advisors, and those involved in delivering orientation can all benefit from this monograph. Students and faculty in student personnel graduate programs will also find this monograph to be a valuable resource.

The editors are grateful for the support and vision of Tom Kerr, President of NACADA, and John Gardner, Director of the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition. Their ideas, insights, and experience were invaluable as we moved from concept to conclusion. The chapter authors also deserve tremendous credit for their contribution to this monograph; obviously, without them there would be no monograph and certainly not the thoughtful ideas on improving the quality of first-year student academic advising.

This monograph is an attempt to address the new issues that will continue to face academic advising programs and advisors through the remainder of this decade and into the 21st century, written *by* practitioners *for* practitioners. It is organized in four parts. Part I, "Understanding First-Year Students," discusses and analyzes today's students: their diversity, characteristics, and needs, and the theories which attempt to explain their development. Wes Habley in Chapter 1 focuses on the demographic and societal trends influencing students who will be making the transition to college in the year 2000. He examines the diversity of student backgrounds that will render the term "typical student" obsolete by the turn of the century. In Chapter 2, Lee Upcraft reviews current literature and theories which attempt to explain the development of today's very diverse first-year students.

Part II, "Advising First-Year Students: Patterns in the Present," focuses on how academic advising is defined and delivered in today's higher education, with a strong emphasis on the student-advisor relationship. Chapter 3, by Eric White, Judy Goetz, Stuart Hunter, and Betsy Barefoot, provides a framework within which academic advising and orientation are linked to help entering students make a successful academic and social transition to campus life, from pre-enrollment to the end of the first semester. Margaret King and Thomas Kerr in Chapter 4 present and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of several models of organizing and delivering academic advising services to first-year students. In Chapter 5, Gary Kramer advocates placing the entering student at the center of a network of technological resources so that advisors may act on behalf of students more as a navigator than an information gatekeeper. He explores several technologies that can improve both the efficiency and quality of academic advising.

Models of delivering academic advising to first-year students are dependent, however, on a successful student-advisor relationship. Susan Frost, in Chapter 6, discusses the concept of developmental advising and emphasizes the importance of faculty-student alliances which lead to increased first-year student responsibility for making choices about courses, majors, and careers. In Chapter 7, Gary Kramer, John Tanner, and Erlend Peterson discuss the importance of establishing this faculty-student relationship early in the student's academic career and the role of the president in supporting this relationship. Robert Glennen and Faye Vowell in Chapter 8 argue that the success of the advisor-student relationship is dependent upon the training, reward, and recognition of faculty advisors, and present strategies for accomplishing these tasks.

However, the advisor-student relationship, while important, is not the only way in which

institutions can enhance first-year student success. In Chapter 9, Derrell Hart describes several largely unrecognized and unaddressed realities of institutional advising programs and makes the case that successful academic advising for entering students requires that programs extend beyond faculty offices and advising centers to places where students live and congregate. In Chapter 10, Anne Goodsell Love and Vincent Tinto extend this argument by discussing the role academic advisors can play in the design and implementation of learning communities and the ways such communities assist students in bridging the academic-social divide that often marks the first-year experience.

The focus of Part III, "Advising Diverse First-Year Student Populations," is on entering students whose prior academic experiences, age, race, or ethnicity has created unique academic advising needs. Virginia Gordon in Chapter 11 begins this discussion by focusing on entering students who are undecided about their careers or majors, either upon their enrollment, or during their first year. In Chapter 12, Nancy Spann, Milton Spann, and Laura Confer continue this discussion by focusing on the advising needs of underprepared first-year students and by offering several strategies for helping these students make a successful transition to college.

In Chapter 13, Elizabeth Creamer, Cheryl Polson, and Carol Ryan focus on adult students —their characteristics, needs, and theories which explain their development—and review how orientation and advising programs can be designed to help adult students make a successful transition to college. In Chapter 14, Tom Brown and Mario Rivas discuss students of color, many of whom have first-year survival rates somewhat higher than other entering students. They highlight the concept of "diversity within diversity" and offer strategies to meet the special advising needs of these students.

The final section, "Advising First-Year Students: Pathways to the Future," offers a vision of advising first-year students into the 21st century. Meeting the challenges of the future starts with strategies for assessing the quality and effectiveness of academic advising, discussed by M. Lee Upcraft, Debra Srebnik, and Jennifer Stevenson in Chapter 15; Srebnik and Stevenson continue this discussion in Chapter 16 by offering an annotated bibliography of selected assessment instruments. In Chapter 17, John Gardner summarizes the recommendations of the monograph and offers a blueprint for action for advising first-year students in the 21st century.

An annotated bibliography for academic advising is provided by George E. Steele in Appendix C. This list of references and resources enhanced by Steele's insightful annotations makes this appendix a valuable tool for both new and experienced advisors.

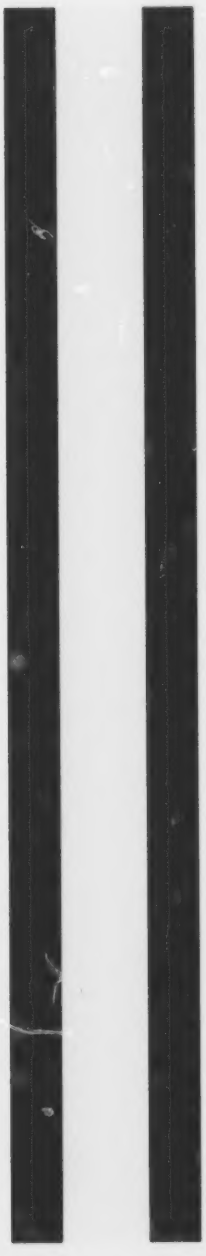
All of us involved in this monograph hope it will stimulate and challenge academic advisors to do their very best in helping entering students make a successful transition to college. We admit and advise them on the assumption they will succeed. They deserve nothing less from us.

**Reference**

Kramer, G. L., Chynoweth, B., Jensen, J., & Taylor, L. (1987). Developmental advising: A taxonomy of services. *NASPA Journal, 24*, 23-31.

# Part 1

# Understanding First-Year Students



# CHAPTER 1

# First-Year Students: The Year 2000

Wesley R. Habley

As American higher education approaches the new millennium, it is becoming increasingly clear that significant challenges confront educators if entering students are to realize their educational goals. Just as preceding generations have been shaped by defining moments, demographic and socioeconomic trends, world events, educational reform movements, and technological explosion, the abilities, needs, and attitudes of the Millennium Generation, (defined by Howe and Strauss, 1993, as the 76 million individuals who will be born between 1982 and 2003), have been and are being profoundly shaped by events and trends taking place in the last two decades of the 20th century. To think that any projections or predictions about students entering college in the year 2000 can be made with certainty is a pompous claim. It is possible, however, to support the hypothesis that this entering class will differ from and be more diverse than entering classes which preceded them. Viewed at a single point in time from inside the academy, these changes are incremental and almost imperceptible. Yet, when viewed over time, the significance of these incremental changes cannot be overlooked.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to support the hypothesis that students entering college in the year 2000 will be unlike those entering in 1980 or even 1990. Through analysis of trends and projections related to high school graduates, college enrollments, academic performance, secondary educational experiences, the American family unit, and student aspirations and expectations, a template for the entering class of 2000 will be crafted. Knowing full well that change is the only certainty, one writes with the uneasy suspicion that, almost as these words are written, a defining event may alter the shape or size of the template, making it less useful than when it was crafted.

### High School Graduates

The precipitous decline in numbers of high school graduates, which began in 1980 when the last of the baby boom generation entered college, finally reversed direction in 1994 and began what is projected to be a steady increase in high school graduates well into the first decade of the 21st century. Between 1990 and 2000, demographers project that there will be a 12.5%

increase in high school graduates throughout the nation (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education et al., 1993). This positive projection for high school graduates, however, requires some qualification. First, the anticipated number of public high school graduates in the year 2000 (2,658,040) will still fall short of the number of public high school graduates in 1980 (2,755,512), and it will not be until the year 2004 that the number of graduates exceeds the 1980 figure. A second consideration is that although there will be a steady increase nationally in high school graduates, there is great variability both among regions and among states within each region. Table 1 shows that the greatest regional growth in numbers of graduates will take place in the West (+34.6%) and that none of the other regions can expect growth equal to the national average of 12.5%. In addition, state changes in high school graduates between 1990 and 2000 range from -9.3% (West Virginia) to +65.6% (Nevada). To a great extent, then, since nearly 75% of undergraduate students attend college in the state in which they reside, change in the number of high school graduates in a given state will have a profound effect on the pool of traditional-age students in the entering class of the year 2000.

**Composition of College Enrollments**

Capturing even the most basic demographic characteristics related to the composition of the entering class of the year 2000 is fraught with complications. While federal government publications such as the *Condition of Education* (U. S. Department of Education, 1992) and the *Digest of Educational Statistics* (U.S. Department of Education, 1994) provide comprehensive data on the gender, status, age, programs of study, level of study, and racial-ethnic background of college students, those data focus on general college enrollment and, thus, are not first-year specific. And while the various studies conducted by Dey, Astin, and Korn (1991) focus on the American freshman, they primarily concern traditional-age, first-year students attending school full-time.

In addition, the projection of enrollments of first-year students is clouded by potentially shifting college-going rates. Although the national college-going rate of traditional-age students has increased steadily throughout the 20th century, it is not possible to predict with certainty if that overall rate will continue to increase, plateau, or even decline. In one scenario, for instance, steady college participation rates of traditionally underrepresented groups may actually result in a decline in overall college participation because underrepresented cohorts, particularly African Americans and Hispanic Americans, are growing at faster rates than the population as a whole.

Finally, issues of semantics confound this overview. For instance, is the definition of an adult learner chronological or is it determined by length of time spent away from formal learning? Or, what is a full-time student? Finally, how are students of mixed racial and ethnic descent accounted for in the data? In spite of these caveats, it is possible to capture college enrollment information which indicates changing patterns in gender, status, racial/ethnic background, and age in college enrollments between 1980 and 2000. Those changes are reported in Table 2.

Table 1
*Percentage Change in High School Graduates - 1990-2000*

| Region | | Range of Change for States within Region |
|---|---|---|
| West | +34.6% | from +65.6% (NV) to +14.9%(WY) |
| South/South Central | +11.3% | from +32.6% (FL) to -9.3% (WV) |
| North Central | +5.6% | from +24.9% (MN) to +0.1% (IA) |
| Northeast | +3.5% | from +18.1% (DE) to -1.4% (ME) |

*Note.* From *High School Graduates: Projections by State, 1992-2009*, by Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association, & College Board,1993, Boulder, CO: Author.

*Age*

As one might conjecture from the data on high school graduates, the age composition of the undergraduate student population will shift slightly downward between 1990 and 2000 due primarily to a 12.5% increase in numbers of high school graduates during that decade. The projected 3.2% gain between 1990 and the year 2000 returns the under-21 age cohort to 1980 levels. Yet, for the age cohort of 22-29 year-olds, there is a marked decline between 1990 (30.4%) and the year 2000 when it is projected that 25.5% of college undergraduates will be 22-29 year-olds. During the same span, however, the percentage of undergraduates aged 30 and over will increase by just under two percent. Although these data are both clear and explainable, projections on the age composition of students entering college for the first time are non-existent.

One could refer to Dey, Astin, and Korn's (1991) data to conclude that more than 90% of first time college students are below the age of 19. Yet, these data are derived from full-time, traditional-age, first-year students, and it is widely acknowledged that a greater percentage of adult students participate in higher education on a part-time basis. Also, the lack of a standard definition of an adult student leads to a lack of consistency in the design, collection, and reporting of data regarding these students. Simply put, in the absence of a commonly held definition of an adult student, it is not possible to discern how many are in a first-year class, how many are first-time students, and how many are returning to higher education to continue as first-year students. No one doubts that there are many "older" students in first-year classes or that the developmental needs of "older" students are somewhat different from more traditional-age students. But, because of

Table 2
*Change in Composition of Undergraduate Enrollment: 1980-1990-2000*

| | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | | | |
| 17 or below | 2.0% | 1.9% | 2.1% |
| 18-21 | 44.0% | 41.2% | 44.1% |
| 22-29 | 31.9% | 30.4% | 25.5% |
| Gender | | | |
| Women | 52.3% | 55.2% | 54.9% |
| Men | 47.7% | 44.8% | 45.1% |
| Status | | | |
| Full-time | 60.7% | 58.3% | 58.9% |
| Part-time | 39.3% | 41.7% | 41.1% |
| Racial/Ethnic Background | | | |
| White | 82.7% | 79.0% | 72.8%[a] |
| Black (non Hispanic) | 9.9% | 9.8% | 11.8%[a] |
| Hispanic | 4.2% | 6.2% | 8.6%[a] |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 2.4% | 4.2% | 5.8%[a] |
| Native American | 0.8% | 0.8% | 1.0%[a] |

*Notes.* From *Projection of Educational Statistics to 2000*, by U.S. Department of Education, 1989, Washington DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the National Center for Education Statistics.
[a]Projected from multiple sources

these problems, the remaining portions of this chapter will focus on describing the characteristics and attributes of traditional-age students who will become the entering students of the year 2000. Readers with an interest in the characteristics and needs of adult students are encouraged to refer to the chapter by Creamer, Polson, and Ryan on adult learners in this monograph or to Kasworm and Pike (1994) for an excellent summary of research on the background characteristics and academic performance of adult students.

*Gender*

The U.S. Department of Education (1989) projects that there will be a slight decline in the percentage of undergraduate women enrolled in college, a reversal of a trend which began in 1978 when women first accounted for more than half of all undergraduate enrollment. By the year 2000, it is projected that 54.9% of undergraduate college students will be women, down an imperceptible 0.3% from 1990.

*Status*

The U.S. Department of Education (1989) also projects a reversal in the percentage of undergraduate students enrolled full-time, a characteristic which has been in decline for more than two decades. In fact, the reversal in this trend closely parallels the increases in high school graduates which began in 1993. Indeed there appears to be a direct relationship between the number of high school graduates in a given year and the percentage of college students who enroll full-time. Finally, although the trend exists, it probably will be imperceptible: In 1990, 583 of every 1,000 undergraduates enrolled full-time while in the year 2000, 589 of every 1,000 undergraduates enrolled are projected to be full-time undergraduate students.

*Racial/Ethnic Background*

The most significant change in the composition of the first-year class of the year 2000 will be in the percentages of the entering class which come from underrepresented groups. Interestingly, projections from the typical sources are not available for the racial/ethnic composition of undergraduate enrollments for the year 2000. Thus, while racial/ethnic enrollment percentages for the years 1980 and 1990 which appear in Table 2 are actual figures, racial/ethnic enrollment projections for the year 2000 which appear in Table 2 are based on current (1992) college enrollment rates of 18-24 year-olds by racial/ethnic category applied to projected changes in the racial/ethnic population cohorts of 18-24 year-olds between 1990 and 2000. These data suggest that there will be an increase in the percentage of racial and ethnic minorities from 21% in 1990 to 27.2% in the year 2000, an increase of more than 6%. And, this change in composition will be even more pronounced if there is upward movement in the college matriculation rates for these students.

**Academic Performance**

Expectations for the academic performance of the entering college class of the year 2000 abound. Amid calls for school reform, a series of lofty performance goals have been set for kindergarten through 12th grade education through the "Goals 2000" initiative which began with the Education Summit of Governors in 1989 (National Goals Panel, 1992). In order to assess America's progress toward these goals, one might examine the educational pipeline on academic performance through using scores and other performance indicators obtained from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Because NAEP assessments are administered at various grade levels, it is possible to compare NAEP results of the entering college classes of 1990 and 2000 when they were at certain grade or age levels in the educational pipeline. NAEP scores for the entering classes of 1990 and 2000 in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science are depicted in Table 3. It should be noted that the scores which appear in Table 3 are based on a scale of 0-500 and that the scores which appear in that table provide only a capsule of the information which is available through the NAEP program. One of the more startling findings of the comprehensive picture of academic performance provided by the NAEP is that when members of the class of 1990 were eight years old, 21% of the boys and 15% of the girls were one or more years

below modal grade level, while for the class of 2000, 28% of the boys and 22% of the girls were one or more years below modal grade level. For a more in-depth study of these performance variables, readers should consult the most recent edition of *The Condition of Education* (U.S. Department of Education, 1992).

*Reading*

NAEP data indicate that educators can expect no appreciable gains in the reading skills of the entering class of the year 2000. Further comparisons of NAEP data for nine year-olds in both classes indicate (a) higher scores for females than for males, ( b) higher scores for white students than for either African-American or Hispanic students, (c) higher scores for students whose parents had completed at least some college, (d) higher scores for students who had attended private schools, (e) higher scores for students from advantaged urban areas, and (f) higher scores for students in the northeast and central sections of the U.S.

*Writing*

Whether the effect will be perceptible or not, comparisons of the writing scores between students entering college in 1990 and those entering in 2000 indicate a slight improvement in writing proficiency. Although demographic breakdowns for writing similar to those presented for reading are not available, there also appear to be slight gains in the percentage of students reporting writing activities in their English classes as well as slight gains in students' perceptions of the value of writing.

*Mathematics*

The slight increase in NAEP mathematics proficiency scores is fueled largely by increases in the percentages of nine-year-old students who perform at or above selected proficiency levels. Those proficiency levels and the percentage of nine-year-olds at or above those levels are (a) simple arithmetic facts from 97% (class entering in 1990) to 99% (class entering in 2000), ( b) beginning skills and understanding from 71% to 81%, and (c) numerical operations and beginning problem solving from 19% to 28%. Gains were reported across all racial/ethnic classifications (White, Black, Hispanic), and although percentages at or above proficiency levels for all three groups are almost equal for simple arithmetic facts, the percentages for Black and Hispanic students achieving the more advanced proficiency categories continue to fall more than 20% below those of White students.

*Science*

Science proficiency scores also slightly increased between nine-year-old students entering in 1990 and those entering in 2000. Although gains were achieved across all demographic groupings studied, further score comparisons show higher scores for (a) White students than for either Black or Hispanic students, (b) students whose parents had at least some college, (c) students from private schools, and (d) students from

Table 3
*NAEP Scores for Classes of 1990 and 2000*

| | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| Reading[a] | 211 | 210 |
| Writing[b] | 204 | 217 |
| Mathematics[a] | 219 | 230 |
| Science[b] | 221 | 231 |

*Notes.* From *Digest of Educational Statistics, 1994*. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the National Center for Education Statistics.
[a]When respective classes were 9 years old.
[b]When respective classes were in fourth grade.

advantaged urban environments. The scores of boys have increased more than those of girls, from being equal for the class of 1990 to a seven point difference for the class entering in 2000.

*Performance Summary*

At least from the perspective of this examination of NAEP scores, it appears that any change in academic performance of the entering class in the year 2000, although slightly improved overall, may not be obvious to post-secondary educators. Gains in the scores of students in the educational pipeline suggest that American education will fall short of several of its goals for the year 2000. As a result, there will be no influx of students with increasing academic abilities in the entering class of 2000, a fact that will require educators to support large numbers of students who will need additional academic intervention if they are to succeed in college.

**The School and Home Environments**

If one were to draw conclusions regarding students entering college in 2000 based solely on demographic trends and academic performance indicators, one would think that, save noticeable increases in minority enrollments, the first-year class of 2000 would be very similar to those entering in 1990. Yet, it appears that nothing could be further from the truth! Students entering in 2000 are, in reality, on the cusp between the 13th generation and the Millennium Generation (Howe & Strauss, 1993). The social and political events that have profoundly influenced them, at least at the time this chapter is being written, are the Challenger explosion, the end of the cold war, the Persian Gulf War, AIDS, and the Rodney King incident (Levine, 1993). And, changes in schooling, the school environment, and in the home environment continue to shape their attitudes, opinions, and behaviors. However, because of space limitations, this author has chosen to list selected indicators of the changes that are taking place in schools, the school environment, and in the home environment.

*Schooling*

The following trends in schooling are highlighted. Unless otherwise noted, the source of each of these statements is the *Digest of Educational Statistics, 1994* (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

- U.S. Department of Education estimates that 500,000 students are home schooled, while home-schooling advocates believe that number to be more than a million (Kuznik, 1994).
- It is projected that in the year 2000, more than a half million students will earn the GED.
- 17 states have implemented standards for issuing additional diplomas which are above the minimums required for high school graduation.
- 32 states have increased the number of Carnegie units required for high school graduation.
- 43% of high school students who intend to go to college *do not* take a comprehensive core of high school courses (American College Testing Program, 1994).
- The pupil/teacher ratio in public schools is on the rise.
- Per pupil expenditures in public schools have not increased (in real dollars) since 1989.
- 78% of parents of school-age children give the public schools a grade of C or below (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1994).

*School Environment*

The following trends are highlighted for the school environment. Unless otherwise noted, the source for each of these statements is *Digest of Educational Statistics, 1994* (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

- The general public believes that fighting/violence/gangs, lack of discipline, and drug

abuse are major problems confronting public schools (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1994).

- More than 100 languages are spoken by high school students in the nation's largest cities (Dunn, 1993).
- One-third of 12th grade students say that disruptions by other students interfere with their learning.
- Nearly 60% of 12th grade students feel that there is a lot of cheating on tests and assignments.
- 31% of 12th grade students indicate that some teachers ignore cheating when they see it.
- 16.3% of 12th grade students indicate that there are many gangs in school.
- There has been a significant decline in the percentage of seniors who report that they participate in athletics, cheerleading, hobby clubs, music, and vocational clubs.
- One in four seniors participates in an academic club.
- 39.2% of high school students report using computers at school.
- There have been decreases in the percentage of students reporting drug and alcohol use.
- Nearly one in four students reports having carried a knife to school.
- 3% of students report having carried a gun to school.
- Nearly 40% of college-bound, high school graduates rate the adequacy of high school education as average or below average (American College Testing Program, 1994).

*Home Environment*

- 17.1% of school-age children live below the poverty level (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1993).
- 14% of school-age children speak a language other than English at home (Dunn, 1993).
- Single-parent families will increase by 16% between 1990 and 2000 when nearly 9 million households will be headed by single parents ("Future of Households," 1993).
- Blended families will increase between 1990, when 45.4% of all marriages were remarriages, and the year 2000 (DeWitt, 1993).
- Every day in America, 40 teenage girls give birth to their third child (Hodgkinson, 1985).
- Nearly 25% of the U.S. population have less than a high school diploma (Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac, 1994).
- In 1992, 5.5% of U.S. families consist of a father working and a mother at home with two children, down from 11% in 1980 (Dunn, 1993).
- 37.2% of high school students report having access to home computers (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Although it is possible neither to capture all the trends in the school and home environments nor to project the impact those trends will have on the college student in the year 2000, it is clear that these trends will profoundly shape the opinions and attitudes of students who do choose to enroll. These trends will also have enormous implications for those engaged in academic advising, because they challenge some of our basic assumptions about students' home and school environments.

**Aspirations, Self-Assessment, and Expectations**

In addition to the areas of demographic characteristics, academic performance, and trends in the home and school environments, the topics of educational aspirations, self-assessment, and student expectations of the postsecondary environment must be discussed also. Although data from Dey et al. (1991) are particularly useful for looking at trends in these areas, and even though there are no assurances that trend lines

will continue until the year 2000, the direction of these trends may provide additional insights. While the major purposes for attending college cited in these studies continue to be attaining a better job and making more money, there is a notable inflation in both degree aspirations and in student estimates of their traits and abilities. In 1980, when students were asked to identify the highest degree they intended to earn, about 48% indicated a degree higher than a bachelor's degree. In 1990, more than 61% of the students indicated that they had degree aspirations above the bachelor's degree. And, when students were asked to compare themselves with average persons of the same age on a series of traits and abilities, first-year students in 1990 had higher opinions of themselves than did students entering in 1980. There were increases in the percentage of students who ranked themselves either above average or in the top 10% on academic ability, artistic ability, drive to achieve, leadership ability, mathematical ability, popularity, popularity with the opposite sex, intellectual self-confidence, social self-confidence, and writing ability. Sadly enough, the only trait for which these percentages decreased was in understanding of others. Should these trend lines continue, members of the class of 2000 will aspire to even higher educational goals and will exhibit even greater confidence in their ability to reach those goals.

Against this backdrop of higher aspirations and higher self-assessment of traits and abilities are the expectations of college which will characterize the entering class of 2000. Because the transition to college has never been smooth for many students, it can be stated with a high degree of certainty that the class of 2000 will be no more likely to understand the realities which will confront them in college than their predecessors. To support this assertion, it is possible to utilize the Dey et al. (1991) data to compare student expectations of college with what they actually experience. Table 4 contrasts student expectations reported by Dey et al. (1991) with actual experiences reported from a variety of sources including the most recent *Student Opinion Survey Normative Report* from the American College Testing Program (1992), based on 103,000 U. S. college students. Unless otherwise noted, the "Experiences" listed in Table 4 are reported from the *Student Opinion Survey Normative Report*.

Indeed, these differences between expectations and reported experiences indicate that college is a transitional shock for students. It is safe to assume that first-year students in the year 2000 will encounter similar, if not greater, dissonance between their expectations of college and their experiences in college.

One more trend must be noted. According to Witchel (1991), there has been a substantial increase in psychological disturbance among college students, and waiting lists for treatment in college counseling centers are a sign of the times. There are more students entering college today suffering from serious emotional distress, including self-destructive behavior, violence against others, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, as well as victimization because of date and acquaintance rape, courtship violence, family or spouse abuse, and family drug and alcohol abuse. Upcraft (1993) has noted that physical health problems are also on the increase, including eating disorders, sexually transmitted diseases, and, of course, AIDS. This means that academic advisors must be aware of signs of mental and physical health problems and be prepared to make appropriate referrals.

**Summary and Conclusion**

Because almost all social and cultural changes take place in small increments, they are not often observable over small units of time. Such could very easily be the conclusions drawn by postsecondary educators who view changes in the entering college class as infinitesimal from year to year. Yet, when viewed from a broader perspective and time frame, there are likely to be some stunning differences between the students who entered college in 1990 and those who will enter college in the year 2000. Changes in age, gender, attendance status, and academic preparation will probably go unnoticed, while changes in racial/ethnic composition, at least for many colleges, will be very apparent. Changes in the areas of the school and family environments, and in student aspirations and self-concepts will,

Table 4
*Percentages of Students Who Expect and Experience Specific Outcomes in College*

| Outcome | Expectation | Experience |
|---|---|---|
| To Be Undecided | 7% | 20% |
| To Change Majors | 12% | 65 to 85% [a] |
| To Fail a Course | 2% | 16% [b] |
| To Take Extra Time to Complete a Degree | 8% | 60% [c] |
| To Drop Out | 1% | 40% [d] |
| To Transfer Colleges | 12% | 28% |
| To Work in College | 36% | 60% |
| To Seek Personal Counseling | 3% | 27% |
| To Need Tutoring | 15% | 20% |
| To Seek Career Guidance | 5% | 25% |

*Notes.* [a] From unpublished institutional internal migration studies.
[b] From unpublished statewide study in Wisconsin, 1984.
[c] From *All One System: Demographics of Education, Kindergarten through Graduate School*, by H. L. Hodgkinson, 1985, Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.
[d] From *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*, by V. Tinto, 1987, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

however, have a significant impact on the way in which students think about, respond to, and value the college experience. Simply stated, the diversity of student backgrounds will render the term "typical student" obsolete as a defining element for entering students of 2000. And, this diversity will most likely lead to greater transitional shock among first-year students, which, in turn, creates an imperative to improve programs and services for them.

The challenges of this imperative will require advisors of the first-year class in the year 2000 both to broaden their understanding of the backgrounds of their students and to develop those skills and abilities which will increase the likelihood of student success. The implications of these challenges are presented below:

*Understanding Student Needs*

1. Advisors must become aware of the demographic, academic performance, and cultural trends which shape the goals and aspirations of the students they serve. In reality, a national overview of these trends applies to *no* single institution. Each of the trends will affect individual institutions differently. Geography, institutional mission, selectivity, multiculturalism, and academic performance combine with other factors to make each institution's first-year class different from those of other institutions. Implicit in this notion, then, is that advisors understand the blend of characteristics of their entering students.

2. Advisors must demonstrate understanding of and sensitivity to the racial/ethnic background of their first-year students and take into account the influence of these students' experiences on their attitudes toward and approaches to college. Demonstration of understanding and sensitivity will, quite probably, result in the application of different advising techniques and approaches.

Frost (1991) provides an excellent summary of the student characteristics and advising techniques that apply to ethnic minorities and to international students.

3. Advisors must demonstrate understanding of and sensitivity to the differential developmental needs of students with disabilities, student athletes, and students who are undecided and/or underprepared and take into account the way in which these circumstances influence their attitudes toward and approaches to college. Frost (1991) also describes important characteristics of and suggests techniques for improving the quality of advising provided for these students.

4. Advisors must demonstrate understanding of and sensitivity to the fact that the first year of college is a major life transition for all students. Although the intensity of the transition varies from one student to another, the academic and social environment of college is different from the academic and social environments from which students have come.

*Advisor Skills and Abilities*

In addition to gaining broader insights on the nature of students to be served, it is equally critical that if members of the entering class in 2000 are to be successful, then an expanded array of advisor skills and abilities must be exhibited. The advisor role should focus on the following attributes:

1. *An advisor must be a mediator.* In this role, the advisor serves as an individual who assists the student in mediating the difference between student expectations and student experiences. Quality advice rests on the ability of the advisor to assist the student in identifying the differences, exploring the reasons for the differences, constructing a plan of action for dealing with the differences, and monitoring the plan of action.

2. *An advisor must be an orchestrator, a blender of student and institutional resources.* Students bring with them a wealth of increasingly diverse resources and background experiences. The institution provides its own resources of faculty, programs, facilities, curriculum, and support services. It is knowledge of *both* student and institutional resources which places the advisor in the orchestrator role, focusing on the full utilization of institutional resources to help achieve student success.

3. *An advisor must be an intervener.* An intervener is an individual who actively inserts herself into a process. The role includes not only monitoring student progress, but also actively interceding when academic progress is not what it should be. Although the role of intervener is one which has been widely promoted in the field of advising (a.k.a. intrusive advising), it must be reaffirmed if students are to succeed.

4. *An advisor must be an advocate for constructive change.* Because academic advising is the only structured activity on campus through which all students have the opportunity for ongoing, one-to-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution (Habley, 1981), advisors know how policies, programs, procedures, and personnel affect students. However, in many cases, advisors do not (are not encouraged to) share with decision-makers the information which would lead to program, personnel, or policy modifications. This is particularly important in the case of the increasing diversity of entering students, because academic advisors may be the first to recognize how this diversity may influence programs, personnel, and policies. The failure to advocate effectively for constructive change, will poorly serve the diverse needs of the entering class in the year 2000.

In conclusion, the challenges faced by advisors of the class of 2000 are formidable, but they are not insurmountable. The challenges will be met, and will be met well, if advisors focus both on gaining a greater understanding of the students they serve and on expanding their roles as mediators, orchestrators, interveners, and advocates for constructive change.

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# CHAPTER 2

# Insights From Theory: Understanding First-Year Student Development

M. Lee Upcraft

Wes Habley in the previous chapter has confirmed what anyone knows who has had anything to do with students in the past 20 years: Today's students are more diverse than ever—by age, race, ethnicity, gender, culture, family background, academic preparation, socioeconomic status—the list goes on and on. Twenty years ago, it was relatively easy to write a chapter on student development because students were more homogeneous and theories were sparse. The challenge today, however, is far greater, not only because students are more diverse and theories abound, but because the institutions they attend are more diverse as well.

While this chapter will review the most prevalent theories on student development in general, and first-year student development in particular, it will, because of space limitations, be more of a road map to various theories than a comprehensive exposition of them.

### General Theories of Student Development in the 1960s and 1970s

Before the turbulent decade of the 1960s, little was written about the growth and development of students in college. Much of what we assumed about students until the 20th century was based upon the principle of *in loco parentis*, in which colleges believed they had a responsibility to act on behalf of parents for the good of their students. *In loco parentis* spawned a plethora of rules and regulations designed to develop Christian moral character. In a way, this was the original student development theory.

The first secular influence on our thinking about college students emerged in the late 19th century, when psychological theorists such as Sigmund Freud and Karl Jung began to write about humans from a perspective different from theologians and philosophers. Twentieth century psychologists such as behaviorists B. F. Skinner, social psychologist Erik Erikson, client-centered therapist Carl Rogers, and developmentalist Jean Piaget also influenced our perspectives on human development, and their ideas were applied to late adolescent college students. Also, writers such as Frank Parsons, Donald Super, and John Holland were identified with the vocational guidance movement and wrote about the career development of college students.

The 1960s marked a turning point in the way in which we theorized and studied college student development. This turbulent decade not only produced student activism in higher education—it also produced the first efforts to explain the growth and development of students in college. It wasn't until the publication of Sanford's (1962) *The American College* that serious scholarship was applied to college student development and the environments in which it occurs. Sanford (1967) postulated the concepts of *support* and *challenge*. He argued that students attempt to reduce the tension or challenge of the collegiate environment by striving to restore "equilibrium." The extent to which students are successful at this task depends on the degree of support that exists in the collegiate environment. Too much challenge is overwhelming; too much support is debilitating. The challenge-support cycle results in growth and change.

Sanford's writings were followed by Chickering's (1969) postulation of seven "vectors of development" which characterize adolescence and early adulthood, based on Sanford's (1967) concepts of differentiation and integration. Probably no other theory of student development has been more cited, used, and researched than Chickering's original seven vectors. Later in this chapter, these vectors will be described, based on recent revisions by Chickering and Reisser (1993) which were designed to apply to adults as well.

At about the same time, William Perry (1970) developed a theory of intellectual and ethical development in which students moved in nine stages from a simplistic, categorical view of the world to a more relativistic, committed view. According to Perry, first-year students start out with an unquestioning, dualistic conceptual framework (right-wrong, good-bad, beautiful-ugly) and grow to a realization of the contingent nature of knowledge, values, and truth. As they move though the stages of development, they integrate their intellects with their identities, gain a better understanding of the world, and find personal meaning through an affirmation of their own commitments.

Similarly, Lawrence Kohlberg (1971) developed a cognitive stage theory of the development of moral judgment. In his view, moral judgment is a progression through various stages of development, each stage representing a mode or structure of thought. He is concerned about how and why judgments are made, as opposed to their content. The structure of moral thought includes the decision-making system, the problem-solving strategy, the social perspective, and the underlying logic in making a moral choice.

### Environmental Theories

Psychology was not the only discipline to affect our thinking about students. In the late 1960s, several sociologists argued that in order to have a complete understanding of college student development, one has to look not only at students, but also at the environments in which they live. They focused on the interpersonal aspect of the campus environment, with a special emphasis on the powerful influence of the peer group. The first notions about peer group influence were first articulated by Newcomb and Wilson (1966) when they introduced the notions of the peer group's powerful effects on first-year students in the first six weeks of college. According to Feldman and Newcomb (1969), peer groups influence students in the following ways: (a) help students achieve independence from home and family, (b) support or impede the institution's academic goals, (c) offer students general emotional support and fulfill needs not met by the curriculum, classroom, or faculty, (d) give students practice in getting along with people, particularly those whose backgrounds, interests, and orientations differ from their own, (e) provide students support for changing, or not changing, and (f) affect decisions about staying in or leaving college.

In the 1970s, the study of student environments expanded beyond the peer group to a more generalized concept of campus ecology. We began to look at the influence of campus environments on student development, focusing on the relationship between the student and his or her environment and the impact of that interaction on academic success and personal development.

In 1973, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education outlined some basic assumptions of the ecological perspective based on

research about college students. This group assumed that students enter college with their own backgrounds, personalities, and experiences, facing an environment never before encountered. This environment can have a powerful impact on students, particularly first-year students, whose need to identify and affiliate with others is strong. The influence is not, however, only one way. Students can also influence environments. Some students, particularly first-year students, are more susceptible to environmental influence, while others, often upper-class students or older students, appear to be less susceptible. Collegiate environments are mutable as well and can be influenced and channeled by the institution to enhance student success (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 1973). When there is congruence between the student and his or her environment, the student is more likely to succeed in college.

These basic assumptions were reinforced by the research of Astin (1973), Chickering (1974) and many other researchers which confirmed the powerful influence of the residential environment, particularly for first-year students. In general, first-year students who live in residence halls, compared to those who live elsewhere, are more likely to earn higher grades, stay in college and graduate, and experience more positive personal development. Hart in Chapter 9, and Goodsell Love and Tinto in Chapter 10 discuss how academic advising can become an integral part of first-year students' residential experience.

More recently, campus climate has become a volatile issue because there is some evidence that collegiate environments may have an adverse effect for underrepresented groups (Fleming, 1984; Evans & Wall, 1991) and women (Hall & Sandler, 1982). Incidents of racial harassment, discrimination, and violence are, unfortunately, all too frequent in today's collegiate environment. So, too, are incidents of discrimination and violence against women, as well as gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons, and others.

Boyer (1990) offered a framework within which to look at campus environments, in the light of what appears to be a deterioration of campus communities. He identified five principles upon which to base a campus community. First, it should be a purposeful community, a place where the intellectual life is central and where faculty and students work together to strengthen teaching and learning. Second, it should be a just community, where the dignity of all individuals is affirmed and where equality of opportunity is vigorously pursued. Third, it should be an open community, where freedom of expression is uncompromisingly protected and where civility is powerfully affirmed. Fourth, it should be a disciplined community, where individuals accept their obligations to the group and where well-defined governance procedures guide behavior for the common good. And finally, it should be a caring community, where the well being of each member is sensitively supported and where service to others is encouraged.

### Specialized Theories of Student Development

With the increased social and cultural diversity of students over the course of the previous decades, the 1980s brought serious challenges to existing student development theories, because it was argued that these theories failed to explain fully the development of underrepresented groups such as women, racial and ethnic groups, older students, international students, gay, lesbian, and bisexual students, student athletes, honors students, commuters, disabled students, and others. Models of student development specifically geared toward these groups proliferated during this decade.

For example, it is now acknowledged that while students of color are in many ways similar to other students in their development, they are also different. Traditional student development theories made certain assumptions about the commonality of environments, cultures, and background of students that simply did not apply to many students of color. Being raised in a minority culture amidst a majority society creates different developmental outcomes for persons of that culture. Parental roles, child rearing practices, cultural values, community commitments and obligations, and other culture-related factors combine to produce different developmental dynamics for minority students. Theories of

student development that focus on diversity include, among many others, black identity development (Cross, 1978, 1991), white identity development (Helms, 1992), Asian-American development (Sue & Sue, 1985), Hispanic development (Martinez, 1988), and Native American development (Johnson & Lashley, 1988). Brown and Rivas in Chapter 14 explore the implications of these differences for academic advising.

Further, it is also now acknowledged that the development of men and women is different in some ways. Carol Gilligan's (1982) landmark work *In A Different Voice* argues that mainstream theorists often mistakenly base their concepts on male behavior, thus totally misrepresenting female development. For Gilligan, the concepts of *autonomy* and *separation* are indicative of male development, while female development is better explained by the concepts of *connectedness* and *relationships*. Other theorists who attempt to explain the unique developmental processes of women include, among many others, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986), Josselson (1987), and O'Neil and Roberts Carroll (1988).

Likewise, Patricia Cross (1981), in her landmark publication *Adults as Learners* was one of the first to challenge the age bias of student development theories. She interpreted adult student development in the light of adult developmental learning theories, which are covered in much greater detail in Chapter 13 by Creamer, Polson, and Ryan. They highlight, among others, Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering's (1989) view that adult learning is a transition process which extends from the first moment one thinks about returning to college to the time when the experience is complete and integrated into one's life.

And finally, until recently, gay, lesbian, and bisexual development was almost totally ignored by developmental theorists. While these students have a great deal in common with their heterosexual colleagues, they are faced with somewhat different developmental issues, based on their sexual orientation. Cass (1979, 1984) identified six stages of homosexual identity formation which are differentiated on the basis of an individual's perceptions of his or her own behavior in relation to self-recognition as a homosexual, including identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride, and identity synthesis.

### Student Development Theory in the 1980s and 1990s

The decades of the 1980s and 1990s brought continued exploration of specific aspects of student development. It was during these decades that higher education became more concerned about why many students leave college, and this concern led to several theories about why some students succeed in college while others do not.

Probably the most often quoted theory about why students succeed in college is Alexander Astin's (1985) *Involvement Theory*. Based upon the extensive body of retention literature, Astin argued that students learn and develop best by becoming involved, that is, by investing physical and psychological energy in the collegiate experience: The greater the quantity and quality of involvement, the more likely the student will succeed in college.

Taking another approach, Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989) argued that student success is dependent on the degree to which students feel they "matter." Mattering refers to the beliefs people have, justified or not, that they matter to someone else, that they are the objects of someone else's attention, care, and appreciation. In the collegiate environment, students, particularly first-year students, must believe that they matter and that others (peers, faculty, staff, and family) care about them. They must develop a sense of belonging if they are to succeed. They must feel appreciated for who they are and what they do, if they are to grow, develop, and succeed in college. If students, particularly first-year students feel "out of things," ignored by the mainstream, and unaccepted, they will feel marginal and are therefore much less likely to succeed in college. Minority students in predominantly white institutions are often most susceptible to these feelings of marginality.

Another approach to explaining student success, focusing on first-year student success, is Tinto's (1987, 1993) reflections of the stages of first-year

student integration into college life. Applying Van Gennep's (1960) concepts to student attrition, Tinto suggested that the process of student departure can be conceptualized into three distinct stages: *separation, transition, and incorporation*. Tinto argues that in order for students to succeed in college, they first must experience separation from their previous life experiences and enter the collegiate environment. They then progress to the transition stage, in which they have not yet acquired the norms or established the personal bonds needed for full integration into the collegiate environment, and are often torn between their old environment and the new one. To negotiate the incorporation stage successfully, first-year students must establish full membership in both the social and academic communities of college life. Social interactions are the primary vehicle through which such integrative associations occur. Entering students need to establish contact with other members of the institution, students and faculty alike. Failure to do so may lead to dropping out. Experiences important to first-year student success include participation in orientation seminars, good peer support, knowledge of student and academic services, and at least one caring relationship with a faculty or staff member.

Returning to Chickering's (1969) seven vectors, Chickering and Reisser (1993) revised them to make them more applicable to today's more diverse students. These revised vectors include (a) developing intellectual, physical and manual, and interpersonal competence; (b) managing emotions such as anxiety, anger, depression, desire, guilt, and shame, as well as rapture, relief, sympathy, yearning, worship, wonder, and awe; (c) moving through emotional and instrumental autonomy toward interdependence; (d) developing mature interpersonal relationships including a tolerance and appreciation for differences and a capacity for intimacy; (e) establishing a sense of identity in a social, historical, and cultural context, including gender and sexual orientation, clarification of self-concept, sense of self in response to feedback from valued others, self-acceptance and self-esteem, and personal stability and integration; (f) developing purpose, including vocational plans and aspirations, personal interests, and interpersonal and family commitments; and (g) developing integrity, including humanizing values, personalizing values, and developing congruence in values.

There were also advances in theories of cognitive development. David Kolb (1984) developed a four stage model of learning. The *reflective observation* stage involves understanding ideas from different points of view and forming opinions from the process of taking in many different ideas. The *abstract conceptualization* stage involves looking at the logic of an idea and systematically using ideas or theories to solve problems. This is the thinking stage of learning. The other two stages *concrete experience* and *active experimentation* involve, respectively, learning from one's feelings and from one's action.

By Kolb's account, a learner enters the learning cycle at a stage determined by his or her own habits and preferences, but in order for learning to take place, the learner must pass through all four stages, perhaps several times, and not necessarily in the same order each time.

Marcia Baxter Magolda (1992) studied students' perceptions of the nature of knowledge and the role of gender in their changing patterns of reasoning. She describes different kinds of "knowers" which are gender related, but not gender "dictated." *Absolute knowers* view knowledge as certain and authorities as having access to absolute truths. Women are more likely to be receivers of knowledge in their patterns of reasoning, while men are more likely to master such knowledge. *Transitional knowers* view knowledge as absolute in some areas but not in others. Women are more likely to be interpersonal in their patterns of reasoning, while men are more likely to be impersonal. *Independent knowers* view knowledge as mostly uncertain. In this type of knower, the two patterns of reasoning were interindividual, used most frequently by women, and individual, used more frequently by men. And finally, *contextual knowers* view some knowledge claims as better than others in a particular context, with no gender differences.

Kitchener and King's (1990) model of reflective judgment is also worth some discussion. They

offer a model of "reflective judgment" defining a hierarchical, seven stage sequence of increasingly complex states of relating to what people know or believe and how they justify their knowledge claims and beliefs. They argue that each stage represents a logically coherent network of assumptions and concepts that are used to justify beliefs. Students progress from Stage 1, when all knowledge is certain, to Stage 2 when all knowledge is certain but not always observable, to Stage 3 when temporary uncertainty emerges, using one's own biases until absolute knowledge is possible, to Stage 4 when some knowledge is permanently uncertain, to Stage 5 when knowledge is uncertain, and subjective interpretation is based on rules of inquiry in a particular context, to Stage 6 when knowledge is constructed, and beliefs are based on generalized rules of inquiry, to Stage 7, when objective knowledge is obtainable, and beliefs are better or worse approximations of reality based on evidence.

The spiritual development of students, which some critics had argued had been long ignored by theorists, was highlighted in the late 1980s when Fowler (1981) postulated six stages of spiritual development. They include *intuitive projective faith*, most often prevalent in early childhood, when fantasy and limitation are powerful influences and faith is a function of what children hear and see from adults around them. In Stage 2, the *mythic-literal faith*, most often prevalent in childhood and beyond, persons adopt the stories, beliefs, and observances that symbolize being a part of a community, and moral rules, attitudes, and beliefs are interpreted literally. In Stage 3, *synthetic-conventional faith*, most often prevalent in adolescence and beyond, faith becomes a basis for one's personal identity and synthesizes one's personal and family based values. *Intuitive-reflective faith*, most often prevalent in young adulthood and beyond, is characterized by individuals recognizing the needs to take responsibility for their commitments, life-styles, beliefs, and attitudes. In Stage 5, *conjunctive faith*, prevalent in mid-life and beyond, persons are open to the voices of their deeper selves, and recognize the prejudices and myths that are part of self-esteem by virtue of one's experiences. In the final stage, *universalizing faith*, individuals move beyond paradoxes and polarities and become grounded in a oneness with the power of being, or more specifically, a sovereign god.

*Implications for Academic Advisors*

While awareness of these theories is important for a better intellectual understanding of today's students, what do all these theories mean for practice? What do they mean for the student who comes to an academic advising office in search of help? The answer to both of these questions is that theories provide contexts within which to build a unique relationship with that student. Each entering student, because of his or her background, experiences, personality, and characteristics, brings a unique identity to the collegiate community. The myriad of collegiate experiences shape and mold that entering identity, resulting in favorable or unfavorable educational outcomes for that student.

By knowing all of the potential influences--past and present, personal, interpersonal, and environmental—in first-year students' lives, we are better able to establish the kind of academic advising relationship that most often lead to student success, however defined. We cannot be effective as academic advisors if we are not aware of the developmental possibilities for each student we see. We must, therefore, be aware of student development theory, and use it for the good of our students. We owe them nothing less.

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# Part 2

## Advising First-Year Students: Patterns in the Present

# CHAPTER 3

# Creating Successful Transitions Through Academic Advising

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Both orientation and academic advising are staples of the first-year college experience in contemporary American higher education, serving important roles in enhancing student success (Noel, Levitz, & Saluri, 1985). But for a variety of reasons orientation and advising have historically tended to exist as events apart from one another—designed, administered, and implemented by different departments or units with little collaboration.

As essential components of a successful first-year experience, orientation and academic advising are processes which can be linked and integrated in a variety of ways. The processes should share the common goal of helping students achieve academic integration as well as social integration into the college experience (Tinto, 1993). On many campuses, the standard method of decentralized advising makes achieving such collaboration an enormous and difficult challenge. However, exemplary practices do exist in which advising processes are linked to pre-enrollment and extended orientation. This chapter will provide an overview of such practices. In spite of what may seem to be divergent aims, styles, and methods, the processes of orientation and academic advising can be successfully linked, thereby providing entering students a coherent introductory experience and a clear view of the academic expectations and realities of campus life.

### Pre-Enrollment Orientation

Entering students receive institutional orientation in a variety of formal and informal, sanctioned and non-sanctioned, official and unofficial ways. Through these various means, students learn about the institution, shape personal perceptions, and make decisions which affect their academic success.

Orienting students to the culture of higher education in general and to a specific institution can take many forms. The particular form depends upon (a) institutional type, mission, and traditions; (b) student characteristics and abilities; and (c) available financial resources for program development and staffing. But whatever the particular form, an intentional and well-planned orientation program should "aid (students) in

their transition to the institution, expose them to the broad educational opportunities of the institution, and integrate them into the life of the institution" (Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Developmental Programs, 1986, p. 97).

In identifying the components of effective orientation programs, Smith and Brackin (1993) name six broad categories of program content: academic information, general information, logistical concerns, social/interpersonal development, testing and assessment, and transitional programming. Results of a 1991 survey of existing orientation programs found that one of the most frequently identified content areas specifically addressed in orientation programs was the topic of "academic structure, requirements, and grades" (Strumpf, 1991, p. 80). This area of content programming was included in 92% to 96% of the programs identified by the survey (Smith & Brackin, 1993). The most recent orientation literature strongly supports the inclusion of academic advising issues in orientation: "The clear trend in orientation . . . is to move away from addressing primarily social, personal adaptation issues to a much greater emphasis on academic orientation and introduction to the college experience" (Gardner & Hansen, 1993, p. 190).

Placing a greater emphasis on creating an academic orientation is consistent with the many aspects of effective academic advising. It is important, however, to recognize that both orientation and academic advising are much more than single, definable events. Rather, they are processes that take place over time with the common goal of enhancing the overall success of college students.

### Linking Pre-Enrollment Orientation and Advising

When entering students are invited to campus before their first semester of enrollment, there is an opportunity to initiate an academic advising program. A well-planned first stage of advising has the potential to keep students engaged in their academic careers throughout their first year and beyond. "Begin the advising relationship with an awareness of the larger purpose of advising and move to an awareness of details," writes Frost (1991, p. 71). Allowing students to work through such a process with academic advisors provides a way for students and the institution to exchange expectations. As Gardner and Hansen (1993, p. 184) indicate, "an effective orientation provides an initial opportunity for the new student to begin to develop that all important relationship with the academic advisor."

For many students, the first personal contact with the institution comes through some kind of pre-enrollment orientation program. Larger institutions and those with automated processes may never see entering students at the point of admission. Consequently, many students arrive at our institutions with little knowledge of the language or practices of higher education. Students need to learn a new vocabulary, such as the difference between colleges and universities or between semesters and terms. They need to understand the curricular structure, such as majors, minors, options, and emphases, as well as distinctions between baccalaureate and associate degrees, or the bachelor of science and the bachelor of arts degrees. Students should know the difference between officially withdrawing from school or simply not attending classes. They need to know who makes the rules, what these rules are, and who enforces them. And, most importantly, they need to know what it takes to succeed.

All of these needs have to be addressed if entering students are to comprehend the nature of the institution they have chosen and take full advantage of the educational experiences provided. Of the many concepts new to entering students, academic advising is sure to be one which, at first, might be especially ambiguous or even unknown. If students are not involved early in the process of academic advising, the opportunity to establish this critical relationship between the student and the institution is often lost. The successful transition of students to higher education depends upon their acculturation into that institution, and it is within the context of academic advising that this transition can occur.

What an academic orientation program looks like is often the result of who has been given responsibility for implementation. When a

program is constructed to focus on academic advising, components can be provided in an integrated, seamless structure so that students are given the opportunity to use information, to relate this information to themselves, and to begin the critical task of assessing themselves in relationship to their academic interests and abilities. The model for such a pre-enrollment academic orientation program need not be complex; rather, it has to reflect the needs of the students, providing them a chance to incorporate what they have learned into meaningful activities.

*Program Components*

A successful pre-enrollment academic orientation program should start with a clearly identified focus which includes components that are well-crafted and carefully articulated. Such a program might include group and individual activities that lead students from general information and broad perspectives to specific information with an individual, more personal focus.

*Introducing the Program.* Learning the language of higher education can come first: Introducing students to the role of academic advising, detailing the many new terms which will become part of their vocabulary, explaining the structure of the college or university and how it might differ from other colleges or universities, examining the mission of higher education in general and of the institution attended in particular. Learning this language often seems like a formidable task for the student, but a well-produced video or slide-tape show, running no more than 15 minutes, can accomplish this goal. In this component, philosophies of cultural diversity can be presented, the range of educational opportunities explored, co-curricular experiences such as volunteerism and leadership development endorsed as legitimate educational endeavors, the use of internships encouraged, and the value of study abroad promoted. What is presented in such an introduction is a distillation of the institution's mission and values. Such presentations are part of the academic advising experience and can serve as a first component.

*Assessing the Student.* A component for assessment can follow an introduction. To a certain extent, all students are assessed academically as they enter college because the admissions process is a type of assessment. While the forms may vary, communicating such assessments is vital if students are to understand what the nature of the transition to higher education will be like. Such an opportunity is important for all types of students: those entering directly from secondary education, those returning to higher education after some years' absence, those transferring from one institution to another. All of these transitions represent a change of context, and understanding the new context will enable the student to cope better.

Assessment should include placement testing and self-report surveying. Academic advisors meeting students for the first time will want to know if students are ready for a particular educational experience. They will want to know about preparation for certain beginning courses and how students compare with other students at the institution. Advisors will want to ascertain the relationship between students' abilities and their interests.

This can be a complex matter. A well-organized assessment component involving placement testing and the collection and dissemination of information about students can be used to assist the advising process. For example, placement testing should relate to the curriculum of the institution. If all students are required to take beginning English composition, then a measure of preparation is necessary. If all students must take a mathematics course, an assessment is crucial.

While placement testing has long been a component of pre-enrollment advising and orientation, the surveying of students along other educational dimensions has considerable potential for a rich exchange between the student and the academic advisor. What do advisors want to know about students, and how can this information be beneficial in an advising exchange? Advisors might seek answers to questions such as the following: How did a student react to specific high school courses? Has the student had any schooling other than high school? How

many hours did a student study outside of classes during high school? Is English the student's native language? What does the student read (excluding school assignments)? Is there a work history (part-time, full-time, paid, or volunteer)? What grades does the student expect, and how many hours of study are anticipated to achieve these grades? In what areas of study is the student interested, and how strong are these interests? How certain is the first choice of major? Who influenced the decision? How much does the student know about the field of study identified? How does the family feel about the choice? If the student were not going to college, what would the alternative be? Does the student plan to have a job while in school or to engage in co-curricular activities?

By answering these questions, students are able to engage more actively in the advising process. They can learn what the institution wants to know about them and how the information, in conjunction with academic assessments, can be used to contemplate the first semester of enrollment. The first purpose of such surveying is to establish an academic advising relationship, not simply to collect data; therefore, the questions must be relevant to the educational experience. Assessment data, especially those which compare students with other students, need to be explained carefully, first, perhaps, with a standardized interpretation followed by the opportunity for an individual meeting with an advisor who has access to these data.

*Interacting Individually.* An effective way to personalize the pre-enrollment stage of academic advising is to include an individual experience that focuses on educational planning issues. In some cases, this may be the first time the student has talked about interests, goals, values, and expectations with anyone from the institution. Discussion of these issues marks a significant point in the student's transition to higher education and must be dealt with intelligently and sensitively. Such an opportunity provides for interaction with advisors using forms of assessment that include admission information, placement testing, and self-report surveying.

For example, the advisor might look to available assessment information in preparation for an individual session with a student interested in pre-medicine. From admission data, the following questions could be asked: What science courses did the student take? How well did the student perform in those courses? Did the student graduate from high school recently? From the placement testing results, the advisor may ask: Did the student perform well enough on the mathematics test to take the courses required for pre-medicine? Were any other results from placement testing pertinent for this student? From the self-report surveying, the advisor may pursue the following ideas: How did the student react to high school science courses? Did the student indicate any volunteer experiences that relate to the field of study? Who may have influenced the choice of pre-medicine? How does the student's family feel about the student's current plans?

Information such as the following might be learned during the individual student session. Specifically, from the admission data available, an advisor learns that the student earned average grades in biology, mathematics, and chemistry in high school. From the placement testing data, the advisor finds that the student needs to review mathematics and cannot start with the first course in the pre-medicine curriculum. From the self-report survey, the advisor learns that the student liked biology, but did not like chemistry in high school. In addition, the student indicates liking a volunteer experience at a local hospital and being influenced by the media portrayal of physicians. Also, the student reports that the family is indifferent to the current educational plan of pre-medicine.

During the session, the advisor and the student will work with the information available from the forms of assessment, as well as with new ideas and perspectives that are raised. The advisor needs to pace the session so that the student begins to see relationships among the pieces of information related to educational and curricular planning. Therefore, the individual educational planning component fits into the context of an academic orientation program by helping

students begin to address the multitude of issues involved in making sound educational plans.

*Presenting Academic Information.* In most institutions, the complexity of academic programs, policies, and procedures can overwhelm new students. Admission materials are usually too general for advising purposes once students select the institution and begin the process of academic planning. Internal academic documents frequently do not take into account how new students will read the information. Therefore, the interpretation of academic materials is critical, and how and when such materials are presented to students constitute an important component of an academic orientation program.

Many documents can become academic advising tools, from the institution's catalog to a department's course descriptions. However, decisions must be made about what is to be presented, and then, when is the best time for introduction. Regardless of the technology used for delivery, only information that will be put to use during the pre-enrollment program should be included in order to help students focus their attention. Exercises and activities in which students use the materials in meaningful ways can help to organize the information.

Also, the effectiveness of the academic information component depends on the skill of the presenter and the nature of the interchange. Small groups of students interacting with each other and with someone who can interpret the materials contribute to students' confidence in using the information. Although the implicit objective of the component may be to unfold the nature of the institution, the explicit objective needs to be concrete and lead to specific outcomes. For example, showing students how to develop a schedule of classes may appear to be simplistic. However, through effective use of academic materials, the activity can reveal the purposes of the curriculum, suggest strategies for individualizing the academic program, and emphasize the importance of academic advising.

Key personnel from the academic units should contribute both to planning and conducting these academic information sessions as well as to monitoring their effectiveness. This is especially true in determining the usefulness of the materials selected and the activities planned. Caution should be exercised not to overload students with too much information at this time.

*Focusing on the Area of Enrollment.* Eventually it is important in pre-enrollment advising programs for students to identify with the requirements and specific advising structure of their chosen area of enrollment. Discussions throughout the advising session, placement test results, the curricula of the institution, and so forth, will take on additional meaning in the context of the student's current educational plans. In some cases, a meeting may take place with someone who will become the student's academic advisor through the first year of college, or perhaps throughout the entire degree program. The concluding activity of this advising session should be the first semester schedule of classes, which represents moving from a general, broad perspective to a more specific and personal focus. At this point, students should be able to use what they have learned to articulate the rationale for particular course selections.

*Involving Families.* A critical part of the educational experience for many students is the involvement of their families in the introduction to college. By sharing some of the same experiences, families who participate in a pre-enrollment academic orientation program have a context in which to understand better the opportunities and challenges that will face their students. The process of educational exploration and decision making about an academic plan is an experience that unfolds over time for most students. As a result, families should be aware of how the institution supports students through this process. Clear presentations of the philosophy and structure of the institution's academic advising process should be incorporated into the program.

Sessions just for families should be included with opportunities to ask questions, both individually and in groups. The long-term effectiveness of the introduction to academic advising rests with the student taking charge, and, for some students,

this may be the first time they make academic decisions on their own with advisors who have the potential to influence their lives. It is important for families to understand this in a setting where adequate time is allowed to address issues with academic advisors.

Three examples of effective pre-enrollment programs are worth describing briefly. The Pennsylvania State University's Freshman Testing, Counseling and Advising Program (FTCAP), a pre-enrollment academic orientation program for students and families, has been in operation for over 38 years. The basic objective of this first stage of academic advising is to enable students to assess their educational plans with advisors before classes begin. The longevity of this program provides a rich perspective on introducing students to academic advising. For an overview, student schedule, and description of activities of this program, contact Judith Goetz, Division of Undergraduate Studies, Pennsylvania State University. Other institutions which include academic advising as a significant portion of orientation include, among many others, Ohio State University, Indiana University, and the University of Texas at Austin.

**Linking Advising and Extended Orientation: The Freshman Seminar**

Equally critical to pre-enrollment orientation is an introduction to academic activities which will follow once classes have begun. While a pre-enrollment academic orientation program can have its own focus, ultimately it should also prepare students for the next phases of their educational experience, such as working within the institution's advising structure. However, an equally powerful way for first-semester students to enhance academic advising and the transition to college is to participate in freshman seminars.

"Freshman seminar" is the most common name for a special academic course which is offered now for new students at approximately two-thirds of American colleges and universities. Although institutions report a wide range of specific goals and objectives for freshman seminars, the goal reported for approximately 70% of them is to provide students an extended orientation to the campus and its resources, to themselves as learners, to the essential academic skills necessary for success, and to the world of higher education, its present and its past (Barefoot & Fidler, 1992).

Although freshman seminars, as a course type, date back over 100 years (Fitts & Swift, 1928), their greatest popularity has come about since 1980 (Barefoot & Fidler, 1992). Survey research conducted by the University of South Carolina in 1988, 1991, and, most recently, in 1994, indicates that well over 80% of these courses were begun in the last 15 years. A number of converging circumstances, both internal and external to the institution, continue to drive this phenomenon. Among these circumstances are the following:

- The increasing complexities of contemporary life which affect the greater society (i.e., diversity, health issues, drug use, conflict and violence) but often have an even more significant impact on first-year college students;
- The influx of first-generation, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and ethnic minority students into higher education;
- The need for colleges and universities to offer preparation in basic study skills and time management;
- The alarming college dropout rate which continues unabated and is at its peak during the first year of college.

Freshman seminars can address each of these four factors through both course content and process. Content for such courses may be an eclectic mix of issues of campus life, study skills, health and wellness, or may focus on any academic topic chosen by the institution and/or its faculty. There is evidence that freshman seminars increase rates of student persistence and academic success, because they are highly interactive, personal, and small groups (approximately 20 students) in which students find support from each other and from the instructor (Fidler, 1991). Freshman seminars that achieve

maximum student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction do result in higher rates of freshman-to-sophomore retention (Barefoot, 1993).

The supportive atmosphere of the freshman seminar makes it an ideal setting for academic advising. In many freshman seminars, some aspects of advising take place informally and unofficially in the context of discussions about potential academic majors and careers as well as reminders to students about registration deadlines and withdrawal/drop-add regulations. In a growing number of these courses, the seminar instructor is the official academic advisor for seminar students. Research conducted in 1991 by the University of South Carolina's National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience indicated that approximately 22% of freshman seminar instructors were the academic advisors for seminar students (Barefoot & Fidler, 1992). Follow-up national survey research in 1994 (National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, 1995) indicates that this percentage has increased to 33%; that is, of the 720 institutions reporting freshman seminars in 1994, 238 indicated that academic advising of seminar students is one of the responsibilities of seminar instructors. In addition, survey data show that the linking of academic advising and freshman seminar instruction is most common in four-year institutions with fewer than 5,000 students. Specifically, of the 238 institutions reporting a linkage of these two activities, 171 were four-year institutions, 136 with enrollments of fewer than 5,000 students. Although the small, four-year campus is the most common setting for academic advising within a freshman seminar, such programs can and do work well at large universities and at two-year institutions.

*Designing Freshman Seminars for Undecided/ Exploratory Students*

The freshman seminar can be a useful structure for providing special assistance to undecided/ exploratory students, and a number of American colleges and universities have developed such seminars (Barefoot & Searcy, 1993; Hunter & Harwood, 1993). One such course, developed at the University of South Carolina in the 1980s, combined an academic orientation to the university with academic advising and career development. The course was designed to provide a systematic approach to the decision-making process regarding academic major and career through the study of higher education and the potential roles of students within the university.

The course had four components: a foundation, an academic orientation, an academic major/ career planning decision segment, and an introduction to student development/campus resources. The individual session topics throughout the term allowed students to accomplish the following goals:

- To acquire a long-range overview with an awareness of short-range realities;
- To identify, develop, and demonstrate skills and unique strengths;
- To make realistic choices based on information about themselves as individuals and the environment;
- To investigate the basis of their choices and possible conflicts resulting from their choices;
- To realize that choices affect future outcomes;
- To accept the fact that the responsibility for gathering information and making choices is ultimately theirs alone.

Specific activities in the foundation component included group building, self-awareness exercises, an examination of the purposes of higher education, and an introduction to student development theory. The academic component included study skills, understanding and using the college catalog, choosing courses and instructors to match individual learning styles, course sequencing and balancing, the registration process, faculty roles and responsibilities, students' responsibilities in the advising process, and calculation of grade point averages. Career planning topics included assessment of personality and skills, values and expectations,

decision making, career information interviews, and résumé writing. Campus resources and student development activities were included throughout the course to support and emphasize various course aspects.

*Programs Which Link Freshman Seminars and Academic Advising*

Even more powerful results can be obtained when freshman seminars are linked to academic advising. For example, at The Ohio State University, a public research university with over 50,000 students, both academic advising and the required, one quarter-hour, 77-year old freshman seminar, "University Survey," are administered and implemented through the University College. During pre-semester orientation, all of the approximately 11,000 new students (both incoming freshmen and lower-division transfer students) are assigned an academic advisor who is also the instructor for the student's section of the freshman seminar. This large pool of academic advisors is comprised of graduate students and professional advisors who attend three weeks of training before teaching the course. The seminar itself involves large group lectures for approximately 200 students and smaller group recitation sessions (approximately 40 students). Because the advisor meets with his/her advisees weekly in the recitation, much advising information can be given to the entire group, students and advisors develop closer relationships, and each is given structure within which to have regular, predictable contact with the other. For more information, contact Mac Stewart, Dean, University College, The Ohio State University.

At the University of Houston, a public research university with over 32,000 students, a freshman seminar, "A Gateway to the Core and Core Study" (Core 1101), has been offered to first-year students since the fall of 1993. Currently, this course enrolls from 60 to 90 students each semester who are in the University Studies Division. Instructors for the course are professional advisors within the Division who also serve as advisors for seminar students. Core 1101 carries one semester hour of elective credit and is divided into three primary units. The first unit which extends over four weekly sessions addresses "Ways of Knowing: Inquiry within the Core." Students are introduced to the core itself and to disciplinary ways of knowing by faculty within core disciplines. The second unit is a traditional eight-week extended orientation seminar in which students gain mastery in basic study skills and related life skills. The last class within the second unit is an advising session in which several advisors work with seminar students to set future course schedules and broader academic plans. The final unit, "From Core Study to Career," extends over the last three weeks of the semester. In this unit, faculty and representatives from both Career Planning and Placement and Learning Support Services introduce students to the professional disciplines and career options. For more information, contact Hyland Packard, Assistant Vice President, University Studies Division, University of Houston.

A third example of linking freshman seminars with academic advising is Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, a liberal arts college with an enrollment of approximately 1,400 students. At that institution, all first-year students are required to participate in two parallel courses: Introduction to Liberal Studies—a semester-long, four-credit course—and Perspectives — a one-half credit extended orientation course which extends over the first eight weeks. All faculty members who teach the Perspectives course also teach these students in one freshman class and serve as the official academic advisors for Perspectives students during the first two years or until students declare a major. Advising is accomplished both in group and in one-on-one sessions between advisor/advisee. In preparation for both advising and first-year instructional responsibilities, participating faculty members are provided pre-semester training workshops and comprehensive supporting materials. By linking advising and freshman seminar instruction, both advisors and students are able to form closer bonds than might otherwise result from the traditional advisor/advisee relationship. For more information, contact Michele Martin, Director of Academic and Career Development, Millsaps College.

At Yakima Valley Community College, an institution enrolling 6,000 students in Yakima, Washington, the two quarter-hour freshman seminar elective is the primary structure for academic advising for first-year students. As part of the course curriculum, students complete the Strong Interest Inventory and undertake personal research on the academic and career paths identified by the Inventory. Prior to the registration date for the next quarter, one class session is devoted to helping students select appropriate courses. Students are divided into small groups by intended major and work together with the instructor's guidance to determine each group member's course schedule. After the course ends, each seminar class convenes for two additional meetings prior to registration during subsequent quarters to share information on courses taken, teaching styles of professors, and plans for the future. After completing one full year at Yakima Valley, students may continue to be advised by the freshman instructor or may select an advisor within the major department. For more information, contact Kathy Calvert, Counselor/Instructor, Yakima Valley Community College.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

An effective orientation process should include pre-enrollment and extended formats and serve as an integral part of a comprehensive academic advising program, based on the following guidelines:

*Pre-enrollment Programs*

- Each student should be provided with individual interaction with an advisor.
- Self-report surveying should be used during the individual session as a mechanism for engaging students in the academic advising process.
- Feedback should be provided to students and their families based upon data collected from the assessment activities.
- Academic orientation should be a coordinated effort between members of the academic community.

*Freshman Seminars*

- Seminars should reflect the needs of an institution and its students.
- Seminars should be taught in small sections by faculty or student affairs staff.
- Class sessions should be highly interactive, personal, and allow for maximum student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction.
- Course content should vary depending on the needs of institution, its students, and its faculty.
- Seminars should be linked to the academic advising program of the institution.

By linking orientation and advising, institutions can reap the following benefits:

- An academic orientation program supports the institutions' retention efforts.
- Essential messages about academic advising are delivered early to students.
- Databases can be established which indicate trends and provide perspectives on the student population.
- Professional development for faculty and staff advisors is enhanced through their involvement in such programs and courses.

Successful academic advising transition programs should include an introduction to the educational milieu and culture, student assessment, individual interactions between the student and the faculty/staff, presentation of academic information, and individual educational planning. Most importantly, orientation and academic advising should be understood not as single events, but as processes that should be linked programmatically.

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# CHAPTER 4

# Organizing and Delivering Academic Advising for First-Year Students

Margaret C. King & Thomas J. Kerr

Following most pre-enrollment academic advising programs, entering students are typically assigned to an academic advisor. Advisors can play an important role in helping students formulate sound educational and career plans based on their values, interests, and abilities, thereby increasing their chances for academic success, satisfaction, and persistence. Academic advising remains the most significant mechanism available on most college campuses for aiding and abetting this important process (Habley, 1993b).

There are, however, choices to be made about who will advise first-year students and how the institution should organize such advising. This chapter begins with a discussion of the various groups on campus that are qualified to deliver academic advising: faculty, professional (full-time) advisors, counselors, peer advisors, and paraprofessional advisors. Next, the seven standard organizational models of advising are discussed: faculty-only, supplementary, split, dual, total-intake, satellite, and self-contained. The discussion includes a basic definition of each model, its strengths and weaknesses, the degree of its popularity on college campuses, and concludes with an example of a campus that has utilized that model. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the factors influencing the organization and delivery of advising services, followed by a discussion of the unique characteristics and challenges that first-year students present to an academic advisor. Two "ideal" models are presented, one for the two-year and one for the four-year campus, both of which are based on collaboration and shared responsibility.

### Advising Delivery Systems

Academic advising services can be effectively provided by five key groups of educators on our campuses, including faculty, professional (full-time) advisors, counselors, peer advisors, and paraprofessional advisors. Decisions about which group or groups to use should be made after consideration of the following criteria: (a) accessibility and availability of the advisor to students, (b) priority placed on advising by the advisor, (c) advisor's knowledge of the major field of study, (d) advisor's knowledge

of student development theory, (e) training required, (f) cost, and (g) credibility with faculty and staff (King, 1993).

Full-time teaching faculty continue to be the primary group providing advising services for students. While their accessibility and availability as well as the priority they place on advising may be concerns, their knowledge of their major field of study can be invaluable. Not only can this help students understand the content of courses and the relationship of courses to the field, but it can also help with career and transfer planning. Faculty advisors, however, may have limited knowledge of student development theory which may make them less effective when working with undecided students or those dealing with personal concerns. This lack of knowledge underscores the importance of comprehensive and regular training for faculty advisors, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8. Faculty advisors score high on the remaining two criteria: cost and credibility with faculty and staff. In institutions where all faculty are required to advise, there is little or no additional monetary cost. And their credibility with other faculty and staff is generally high.

Professional full-time advisors are the second most common delivery system. Because they are generally housed in a central location, spend a full day in their offices, and have advising as a priority, they are more easily accessible to students. While they may not possess the in-depth knowledge of courses and programs as do faculty, they are generally more knowledgeable about the broad range of institutional programs, policies, and procedures and can therefore be more effective in working with exploratory or undecided students. Their knowledge of student development theory and the broad range of services available to students also makes them more effective in working with students dealing with personal and career concerns or with special needs. Initially, training is extremely important, although that need diminishes over time. Cost will be high, as special staff are hired to provide the advising function. And unless they teach or hold faculty rank, professional advisors may not enjoy the same respect or credibility as do faculty.

Counselors often provide advising services on two-year college campuses, and their strengths and weaknesses are similar to those of professional advisors. One difference might be in the priority placed on advising, however, since professional counselors may be more likely to engage in developmental advising, such as providing career and personal counseling, and may view traditional academic advising as less important.

Peer advisors are utilized more frequently on four-year college campuses. They rate highly in terms of accessibility and availability to students, since their hours are flexible and they can work in a variety of locations. While advising may be a priority, there may be difficulty in balancing the advisor and student roles. Peer advisors generally do not have in-depth knowledge of courses and programs nor knowledge of student development theory; consequently, careful selection, training, and regular supervision are critical. Depending on the structure of the program and the amount of interaction they have with faculty and staff, credibility could be positive or negative.

Paraprofessional advisors, generally described as persons with at least an associate's degree, have strengths and weaknesses similar to peer advisors. They are enthusiastic, economical, and committed, and their use frees up the professional advisors or counselors for more in-depth advising with students who require extra service. Careful selection, training, and supervision are critical. As with peers, paraprofessionals are most effective when used in conjunction with a faculty or professional advising delivery system rather than as the sole delivery method. Table 1 shows the strengths and weaknesses of the five different advising delivery systems.

**Standard Organizational Models of Advising**

For many years, little attention was paid to organizational models of academic advising. This was due, in part, to a belief that institutions were unique and, as a result, similarities would be limited. It was also due to a blurring of the distinction between organizational models of advising and the delivery of the advising

Table 1
*Advising Delivery System Matrix: Strengths and Weaknesses*

| Delivery System | Access/ Availability to Students | Priority Placed on Advising | Knowledge of Academic Discipline | Knowledge of Student Development | Need for Required Training | Cost to Institution | Credibility w/Faculty/ Staff |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Faculty | Low | Low | High | Low | High | Low | High |
| Professional Advisor | High | High | Average | High | Average | High | Low |
| Counselor | Average | Average | Average | High | Average | High | Average |
| Peer | High | Average | Low | Low | High | Low | Average |
| Para-Professional | High | High | Average | Average | High | Low | Average |

*Note.* From "Advising Delivery Systems," by M. C. King (1988), in W. R. Habley (Ed.), *The Status and Future of Academic Advising*, Iowa City: American College Testing Program.

services. In the early 1980s, research by Habley (1983) and Habley and McCauley (1987) identified seven organizational models of advising on college campuses. That research was expanded in the American College Testing Program's (ACT) Third and Fourth National Surveys on Academic Advising.

Each of the organizational models currently in existence in two- and four-year institutions has strengths and weaknesses. And some models are more popular than others. The following discussion describes the models, highlights the strengths and weaknesses of each, and shows the degree of popularity as determined by ACT's Fourth National Survey on Academic Advising (Habley, 1993a). Each section concludes with a brief description of a campus that has utilized that model.

*Faculty-Only Model*

In this model, each student is assigned to a specific faculty member for advising, generally someone in the student's academic program. Undecided students may be assigned to faculty at large, to liberal arts faculty, to faculty who volunteer to advise them, or to faculty with lighter advising loads. This is the only model in which the designation of faculty refers to both the organizational model and the delivery system. While there may be an overall advising coordinator, the supervision of advisors is generally decentralized in academic sub-units.

The Faculty-Only Model is the predominant model in both two- and four-year private institutions and was utilized by 35% of all institutions responding to the ACT survey. The model has many strengths, not the least of which is the value of strong student/faculty relationships in terms of student growth, satisfaction, and persistence. In institutions where advising is part of faculty responsibilities, low cost is also a positive aspect. However, when all faculty are required to advise, there can be varying levels of commitment, resulting in an inconsistent quality of advising. In addition, faculty may not have the interest or skills necessary to advise students who are undecided, underprepared, or have other special needs. To increase knowledge and skill levels, both overall coordination and comprehensive, regular training are essential.

Sage Junior College of Albany (NY) and Stonehill College (MA) provide examples of effective faculty advising models. In both private institutions, all faculty advise and begin those responsibilities when students come to orientation. At Sage JCA, overall coordination is provided by the Associate Dean for Student Development, while at Stonehill the Office of Academic Services coordinates the service.

*Supplementary Model*

While faculty serve as advisors for all students in this model, there is also an advising office that serves as an information clearinghouse

and referral resource, but which has no original jurisdiction for approving advising transactions. The office may also provide resources, implement advisor training, and develop, maintain and update information systems. Supervision of faculty advisors occurs in the academic sub-units while the advising office may have its own coordinator.

The Supplementary Model was utilized in 16% of institutions responding to the ACT survey. While it is not particularly popular in two-year colleges, it is the second most popular model in four-year private institutions, utilized by 26% of those institutions responding to the survey. For institutions utilizing faculty as the only delivery system, this model has the advantage of providing coordination of advising through a central office, coordination which may not exist in the Faculty-Only Model. Yet many of the disadvantages of the Faculty-Only Model may still exist. In addition, if the advising office has no jurisdiction for monitoring or approving academic transactions, credibility with faculty may be an issue. Cost also begins to be a factor when staff are hired to assist with advising services.

Stockton State College (NJ) provides an example of this model. At Stockton, all faculty are required to assume an advising load. The advising office analyzes all transcripts, assigns advisors, maintains the handbook, performs graduation clearance for general education requirements, and meets with all students prior to registration whose grade point average falls below a 2.0.

*Split Model*

The initial advising of students in the Split Model is divided between faculty members in academic sub-units and the staff of an advising office. The advising office has original jurisdiction for advising a specific group of students (e.g., undecided or underprepared students, athletes, etc.). Once specific conditions have been met, such as declaring a major, students are then assigned to advisors in their respective academic sub-units. The advising office has a coordinator or director and may have campus-wide coordinating responsibility. The office may also serve as a referral resource for students assigned to advisors in the academic sub-units.

This model was utilized by 20% of the institutions surveyed and is the predominant model in four-year public institutions. It has the advantage of providing advisors who have the skills necessary to advise selected groups of students who may be at higher risk than others, while at the same time utilizing faculty. Yet to be successful, there must be close coordination between the advising office and the academic sub-units. In addition, special attention must be given to students in transition from the advising office to faculty advisors.

Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania provides an example of the Split Model. The Division of Undeclared Majors was established to enroll and advise all students who had not declared a major. Advisement was provided by 65 volunteer faculty and 7 administrators. Once a major is selected, students are reassigned to a major advisor by the department chair.

*Dual Model*

In the Dual Model, students have two advisors. While faculty members provide advising related to the students' program of study, advisors in an advising office provide advising related to academic policies and registration procedures. The advising office also generally advises undecided students and typically has a coordinator with campus-wide coordinating responsibilities.

The Dual Model was utilized by 6% of the institutions surveyed. It has the advantages of two delivery systems with the corresponding strengths of each. To be successful, however, the advising responsibilities of faculty and of the advising office must be clearly articulated, students must be made aware of whom to see for what, and, as in parenthood, the faculty member and the advising office staff member must be careful that they are not "played off" one another. In the ideal situation, both faculty and advising staff members would meet regularly to discuss concerns related to advising and advisees. This model will be discussed more fully later in this chapter.

California State University, Chico utilizes the Dual Model. Advising is decentralized in departments. The advising office serves as a drop-in center regarding academic policies, procedures, and academic standing. The office evaluates transfer documents, performs graduation clearance, coordinates orientation, provides faculty training, and assists undeclared students and athletes.

*Total-Intake Model*

In this model, all initial advising of students is done by advisors in an advising office until a set of institutionally predetermined conditions have been met. Examples of conditions could be completion of the initial registration, of the first semester, or of a specific number of credits. At that time students may be assigned to faculty in their academic sub-units. A director or dean of the advising office may have responsibility for campus-wide coordination of advising. There are two additional variations of this model in which the office may also have responsibility for the development and administration of curriculum and instruction and/or the development and enforcement of policies and procedures.

The Total-Intake Model was utilized by only 5% of the institutions surveyed; yet it has many strengths, one of which is the ability to front-load the system with trained advisors who are prepared to work with all students, undecided or decided, adults or traditional age, underprepared or prepared, etc. Special care must be given to students as they make the transition to a faculty advisor, and advising office staff must work closely with faculty advisors to gain their respect and confidence. This model will also be discussed more fully later in this chapter.

Ocean County College (NJ) provides an example of the Total-Intake Model. All initial advising for students is provided by paraprofessional advisors working under the supervision of the Counseling Center. Advisors provide advisement for students through their first year at which time students are assigned to faculty advisors in their program of study.

*Satellite Model*

In this multiversity model, advising offices which are maintained and controlled in the academic sub-units provide advising for all students whose majors are within a particular college or school. Undecided students are generally advised in a separate satellite office that has responsibility for overall campus coordination of advising and for providing support to all advisors.

Because very few two- or four-year institutions approach the size of multiversities, this model was only utilized in 3% of the institutions responding to the ACT survey. Overall coordination of advising services becomes a special concern in this model because of its decentralized nature, as does consistency in the quality of advising. Close attention must be given to the transition process for students who declare or change majors and to advisement for students with special needs.

The Pennsylvania State University utilizes this model. Advising for students with declared majors is decentralized in the various schools and colleges, while advisement for students who are undeclared or on probation occurs through the Division of Undergraduate Studies. That Division provides campus-wide coordination for advisement services.

*Self-Contained Model*

In the Self-Contained Model, all advising takes place in a centralized unit. That unit is administered by a dean or director who has responsibility for all advising functions on the campus.

The Self-Contained Model was utilized by 16% of the institutions surveyed by ACT, and is predominant in two-year public institutions where the Counseling Center frequently has responsibility for all advisement. This model can be described as an administrator's dream and has many advantages which include a trained group of advisors who have advising as a priority, a central location, and easy accessibility for students. Key drawbacks to this model are that it does not take advantage of faculty expertise nor does it promote student-faculty interaction.

Johnson County Community College (KS) provides all advisement through the Counseling Center from a student's point of entry to point of departure. The Director of Counseling coordinates all advising services, and extensive training and evaluation are provided.

### Factors Influencing the Organization and Delivery of Advising Services

So which model is best? The answer is any of them, depending on several key factors. The first of these factors, the institutional mission, includes such components as control (whether the institution is public, private, or proprietary), selectivity (open door versus highly selective), and the nature of the program offerings (liberal arts versus technical). Advising services may need to be organized differently at a public community college than at a highly selective four-year private university.

The second factor influencing the organization of advising services is the student population. An institution with students who are predominantly first-generation, underprepared, nontraditional, undecided, socioeconomically diverse, and commuting needs a more centralized and intrusive advising system than an institution where students fall at the other end of the spectrum.

Faculty will also affect the organization of academic advising. The extent of that impact will depend on the faculty members' interest in advising, awareness of existing problems related to advising on the campus, and willingness to develop the skills needed to address those problems. Their role is also influenced by the priority that the administration places on advising, the extent to which academic advising is evaluated, recognized and rewarded, and any faculty contracts or collective bargaining agreements that exist.

The fourth key factor influencing the organization and delivery of advising services is the complexity of institutional programs, policies, and procedures, including such things as the sequencing of courses, the scope of the general education requirement, the complexity of graduation requirements, and the degree to which the advisor must approve of a variety of academic transactions. The more complexity that exists, the greater the need for skilled advisors working within a highly structured advising system.

Three additional factors that can affect advising are budget, facilities, and the college's organizational structure. If the budget for advising services is limited, an institution may be forced to rely on existing personnel or less expensive personnel to provide the service. If space is limited, a centralized advising service may not be feasible. The organizational structure, which will dictate which office has the ultimate responsibility for advising services, also affects how those services can be organized and delivered.

### The Ideal Model: Shared Responsibility

Why is there a need to have a different advising system for first-year students? College is a time of change for all students, but first-year students present a special set of challenges to the academic advisor. The characteristics and concerns that are unique to first-year students have been discussed in earlier chapters, including anxiety about fulfilling expectations of peers or faculty, exposure to a new culture, personal issues with family, breaking away from the familiar, attachment to a new set of norms, uncertainty about major or career, incompatibility, academic underpreparedness, increased social distractions, ability to manage time, and others.

Is it realistic to assume that one academic advisor is capable of assisting or has the time and energy to address all of these special needs of the first-year student? When collaboration and shared responsibility are central to advising, the answer can be yes since an advising system will result (Frost, 1991). Colleges are systematic enterprises comprised of linked and interactive parts, and people and programs working together are important in achieving positive outcomes (Tinto, 1987). This is certainly true for effective academic advising. What is proposed in the following ideal models is that institutions utilize the strengths of the various key delivery systems on campus to advise the first-year student in a collaborative, shared-responsibility system.

### The Two-Year College Ideal: Total-Intake Model

An ideal advising model for two-year colleges would be the Total-Intake Model where there is a centralized advising office with a full-time director reporting to the chief academic or student affairs officer. That office would provide all advisement for first-year students and continued advising for students who are exploratory, underprepared, in academic difficulty, or changing majors. Students would eventually be assigned to faculty advisors in their own programs of study once they have made some of the initial adjustments to college.

The advising office would be staffed by a combination of full-time advisors or counselors, faculty working part-time in the office, and paraprofessionals or peers. All advisors would be carefully selected, receive systematic skills training, have advising as a specific responsibility, and be evaluated and receive appropriate recognition and reward for exemplary advising.

The advising office staff would interact regularly with such offices/services as admissions, financial aid, registration, placement testing, counseling, academic support services, as well as with the academic departments. The office would have responsibility for pre-service and in-service training for all advisors, for evaluation of the advising system and advisors, and for recognition and reward of exemplary advising. In addition, it would have responsibility for development of both advisor and advisee handbooks, for the development, maintenance and distribution of advising files, and for coordination of a freshman seminar program.

### The Four-Year Ideal: Dual Model

Issues common to first-year students (for example, anxiety of performance, adjustment to a new culture, adjustment to a new set of norms, time management, breaking away from the familiar) are unique to this subset of the student population. Faculty, even those most committed to academic advising, usually are not comfortable addressing these issues with first-year students. Consequently, the ideal model for four-year institutions would be based on the Dual Model where faculty members are providing advising related to the student's program of study while professional advisors or counselors working in an advising office provide advising related to academic policies and registration procedures. Peer Advisors would assist faculty in delivery of a first-year student seminar and help the first-year student with adjustment problems.

The advising office for small four-year schools would be centralized and would have campus-wide coordinating responsibilities. In large institutions the academic advising office would be college/discipline specific and normally would report to an Assistant/Associate Dean. Campus-wide coordination would be achieved by a committee comprised of all the college Assistant/Associate Deans and coordinated by the Vice President of Academic Affairs or Assistant Provost. This office would also be responsible for the faculty used to advise first-year students, the seminar courses, and the training, selection, and supervision of the peer advisors.

The faculty who are used as advisors of the first-year students would be carefully selected, would receive systematic training, would have advising considered as an integral component of their service requirement, and would be evaluated and receive appropriate recognition and reward for exemplary advising. The faculty would either rotate as advisors of first-year students, or, after two years, the students would be reassigned to another departmental advisor so that advising loads could be balanced.

Peer advisors would be used during the first semester and assigned to work with a faculty member as a resource in a first-year student seminar course. Peers are often reported to be more accessible, enthusiastic, and credible than faculty advisors, and student satisfaction with peer advisors is generally high. However, they need close supervision to prevent them from offering subjective and experiential advice. The faculty instructor must remain the primary helping agent in the advising process through meeting with students individually and leading the student seminar (Boe & Jolicoeur, 1989).

The advising office would coordinate all advising for first-year students and would identify specific professionals as first-year student advisors. The advising office would continue advising students who are undecided, in academic difficulty, changing majors, or in specialized programs such as dual-degree or minors. Students would be assigned to non-first-year faculty advisors after completing the sophomore year.

## Conclusion

The two "ideal" advising models discussed above have many features that are common, the most important of which is the use of full-time faculty as advisors. There is a great deal of evidence that supports student-faculty interaction, demonstrating that contact outside the classroom influences student development and decision-making (Tinto, 1975; Pascarella, Terenzini & Wolfle, 1986; Kramer & White, 1982; Fuller, 1983). As Astin (1977) concludes, "student-faculty interaction has a stronger relationship to student satisfaction with the college experience than any other student or institutional characteristic" (p. 223).

Faculty, however, cannot do it by themselves, thus the need for an advising center staffed by professional advisors/counselors, peers and/or paraprofessionals. The advising office would interact regularly with other offices, services, and departments on campus. The advising center would have responsibility for advisor training, evaluation, and recognition/reward; development of advising handbooks; development, maintenance, and distribution of advising files; and coordination of the freshman seminar program.

All advising models have both advantages and disadvantages. Among the disadvantages of the proposed ideal models would be cost, since people would be hired specifically to provide advising services (however, some of the added costs may be offset by increases in student retention), and the possible lack of continuity in the advisor/advisee relationship developed in the student's first year. However, on the positive side, these models utilize the best advising resources during the times that are most critical to student success and retention. Well-trained advisors with student development backgrounds are available to assist students during the first semester or year when they are most apt to explore various programs and declare or change majors. In addition, students gain, or continue to gain, the expertise of faculty when they are more settled in their programs and need faculty assistance in making connections among current study, future study, and work. The proposed models provide a way of easing heavy faculty advising loads and guarantee that advising services are coordinated and supervised.

The use of faculty combined with other delivery systems makes for a well integrated advising system. If the current literature on academic advising has one theme it is that of shared responsibility (Frost, 1991). Applying the concept of shared responsibility and having students work with an integrated team of advisors as presented in the ideal models will provide an opportunity for academic advising relationships to develop and will provide learning experiences that prove invaluable to students, not only during college, but for their lifetime.

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# CHAPTER 5

# Using Information Technology to Enhance First-Year Student Advising

Gary L. Kramer

No matter who does academic advising or what model is used, information technology is an important component of first-year student academic advising. This includes what first-year students expect or need from advisors as well as how and when information technology fits into first-year advising. An automated and highly student-centered profile will be described which provides for individualized course planning information based on academic preparation, campus resource information which matches students' needs and involvement, and other features. The chapter also discusses the application of touch-tone telephone (TTT) technology and degree progress reports to course scheduling. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the advantages of using information technology in an advising program for first-year students.

### Context

The ideal blend of information technology and advising provides the timely collection, analysis, storage, distribution, and management of critical academic planning information. Using technology assists advisors in providing entering students with critical, timely, accurate, and individualized academic information. All the applications of technology to academic advising described in this chapter will assuredly fail without the appropriate and timely integration of advisors. However, when both technology and advisors work together, they can enhance first-year student advising. The placing of a human face on the institution not only suggests a counterbalancing of technology with human response, but helps avoid student and advisor rejection of the application of computer technology to academic advising.

Technology can free advisors to individualize services and give students assistance beyond that which is routine. Advisors need technology to know who is entering the system and how those students are progressing in it. Just as important, they need to know whether entering students are moving effectively through the institutional system. No other students are more vulnerable to changes in academic plans and thus in need of more help in stabilizing their academic direction than first-year students. For example, over two-thirds of entering students

change their majors during the first year (Kramer, Higley, & Olsen, 1993). In addition, the transition to college is often haphazard and confusing for entering students.

The integration of information technology in first-year student advising is a way to help advisors do things differently (Kramer & McCauley, 1995). For example, first-year students need the personal touch—someone to listen to them, help them identify and reach their academic goals, and help them individualize academic information. The apt integration of information technology adds value for the student and the advising process because it places the student at a starting point for everything academic advising is supposed to do. Moreover, it suggests that advisors begin with student information needs and work backward from there. First-year student advisors then become guides rather than gatekeepers of information technology.

### What Do First-Year Students Expect From Advisors?

As emphasized throughout this monograph, the first year of college is often characterized as a period of transition and adjustment. First-year student advisors must be in a position to anticipate needs, offer information and planning assistance, and coordinate institutional resources to promote student development. Levine (1986) points out that advisors should keep in mind that "college needs to give students a stronger connection with the larger world and a deeper spirit of commitment, even obligation, to others. The freshman year is the best chance we have to touch the hearts and minds of our students. For many students, it is our only chance" (p. 6).

On the other hand, there is substantial evidence that most entering students decide to stay or leave within the first eight weeks of college (Tinto, 1987). These early weeks are decisive: They constitute a bonding period with the institution, a time when students decide not only about staying for the short term but, too often, about staying in college altogether. Specifically, first-year students are at risk because they are unfamiliar with college resources, their major field (if any), the faculty, course work, academic expectations, and career opportunities. So they have lots of information needs which can be met, in part, through the integration of information technology with many aspects of first-year advising.

*Individual Assistance*

Addressing first-year student needs is critical to resolving students' concerns about the transition from high school to college. For most entering students, the first year of college is both exciting and crisis-laden. To be successful, first-year advising must assess needs, give individual assistance in course scheduling, identify tutorial needs, connect areas of student interests with campus resources, and familiarize new students with academic departments and faculty (Kramer & Spencer, 1989).

It is important to distinguish between the information needs of first-year students and those of other students. Defining student advising needs by entering class provides direction for an advising program. Advisors who recognize entering class differences and coordinate institutional resources to promote student development will be in a position to anticipate needs and offer personalized academic planning assistance. See Appendix B at the end of this monograph for a suggested taxonomy for first-year students' academic advising services. The taxonomy describes what advisors can do to create a learning environment for first-year students and to focus on specific information needs (Kramer, Chynoweth, Jensen, & Taylor, 1987).

*Academic Goals*

Most entering students lack information about and experience in an academic discipline, as well as planning and decision-making skills, which makes choosing a major consistent with their interests, skills, and goals a challenging task. Although first-year students tend to change majors more often and at a greater rate than do other students, approximately one half of them at graduation have migrated back to their initial major preference. Thus, an early statement of preference could be one determining factor in academic goal achievement. For

example, advisors alerted to this phenomenon could help students who have made early declarations have more confidence in their initial decision by providing positive support (Kramer, Higley, & Olsen, 1993).

Stark, Shaw, and Lowther (1989) note that coherence in undergraduate education depends, in part, on developing links between students' educational goals and those of colleges. One cause of entering students' confusion is an advising system that fails to help them identify, early on, their academic goals and plans.

*Student-Institutional Fit*

Pascarella (1986) found that students who are well-suited to the institution and program they choose are more likely to have academic success. An important factor in advising first-year students is a well implemented plan to encourage student-institution fit. Such a plan provides opportunities for first-year students to learn about an institution's academic expectations and requirements at appropriate intervals in their collegiate experience. It also allows them to make academic plans intelligently and requires that the institution assess the characteristics and needs of its entering students. Understanding the educational perspective and motivation of these students is critical to effective advising. But often advisors erroneously assume that they understand entering students' needs, preparation, motivation, and goals and, therefore, fail to respond appropriately.

*First-Year Student-Campus Involvement*

A key concept of student development is Astin's (1993) theory of student involvement, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. First-year students must become involved in the institution, and academic advising can serve as one vehicle for that involvement. The best academic advising is student-centered and concentrates on how first-year students can use the advising they receive to achieve academic success. For example, first-year students seeking clarification of a chosen major might be directed to a major-related academic club, enabling them to meet peers and faculty. Or the advisor might help first-year students get involved in study groups, research projects, field trips, cooperative education, and other career exploration activities, all of which provide opportunities for them to become involved in the institution, and, most importantly, to develop academically.

*Faculty-Student Interaction*

Faculty advising for first-year students is important for many reasons. There is clear evidence that when first-year students and faculty become acquainted and interact, they form a foundation on which future relationships can be built. Studies clearly indicate that student involvement in the institution and regular faculty-student interaction increase persistence, academic success, satisfaction with faculty and quality of instruction, and general satisfaction with the college experience (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Pascarella, Terenzini, & Wolfle, 1986; Tinto, 1987).

## Information Technology and First-Year Advising

The premise for using information technology in the advising process is to help entering students deal with the most important issue they must face: the place of academics in their lives, particularly its impact on intellectual and personal development. Bringing together student potential for personal and academic development and the institution's vast resources and educational opportunities is no small challenge for an academic advisor. The better the integration of information technology with first-year student advising, the more likely it is that those students will gain confidence in their ability to succeed academically, become more involved in the academic community, and, as a consequence, persist in obtaining their academic goals. Integrating information technology with first-year student advising plays an important role in creating a learning environment that (a) promotes self-awareness and assessment, (b) provides an integration of and assistance with academic and career planning, (c) supports planning for decision making, and (d) offers exposure to a variety of campus resources and individuals.

An effective advising program uses information technology to the fullest. The traditional advising scenario–an advisor with a catalogue in one hand and a mimeographed copy of college requirements in the other—is outdated, ineffective, and a waste of time. On the other hand, the use of technology in first-year advising not only adds to program effectiveness and efficiency, but most importantly, provides needed time to personalize services and focus on student development.

First-year student advising not only involves faculty but also helps make the critical connection between student academic preparation, expressed interests, goals, and institutional resources. This can be a challenging and labor-intensive matter if information technology is ignored. Technologies such as the automated first-year student profile, and others described in this chapter, can be applied to virtually any academic advising program.

*The Automated First-Year Student Profile*

Given the entering student's academic strengths and needs, and given an institutional commitment to student academic success, the concept behind the automated first-year student profile is to individualize admissions data and institutional resources for the purpose of individual student academic planning. Insertion of the word "automated" is important. On most campuses, data and technology are available to accomplish the objectives of an automated profile, thus freeing advisors from labor intensive data retrieval routines. More importantly, they are freed to listen, reason, personalize, speak, smile, and individualize the entering student advising process. Furthermore, advisors must be available to interact with the student and to integrate the automated profile into the advising process.

Specifically, the profile should communicate to the entering student (a) recommended courses based on the student's level of academic preparation–the beginning of institutional fit; (b) campus resources, services, and other opportunities for campus involvement based on expressed interests and needs; and (c) the name, campus address, and phone number of the assigned faculty advisor–thus putting a human face on the institution and creating the circumstance for faculty-student interaction (Kramer, Rich, Taylor, & Udarbe, 1993).

The design of the automated profile should not only respond to what is known from research about entering students, but should also carefully integrate and clarify institutional resources available. For example, using data stored in the admission file, the personal profile can (a) identify appropriate English and math courses or honors curriculum based on high school preparation and nationally normed entrance examinations, (b) respond to student requests for tutorial services information in specific academic areas, (c) connect interests with the academic curriculum, and (d) match co-curricular activities with students' expressed interests and needs. (See the Appendix at the end of this chapter for an example of an automated first-year student profile).

In summary, the automated profile taps into and organizes data sources on the entering student in order to accomplish the following:

- Create a sense of academic-institution fit by recommending critical first-year courses on the basis of review of high school transcripts and national exam scores.
- Match institutional resources with students' expressed needs and interests.
- Involve faculty with first-year students.

*Automated Transfer Evaluation*

An automated transfer evaluation system reduces a backlog of transcripts from transfer institutions, notifies students as soon as possible of transfer equivalencies, and informs the academic community about the transfer evaluation process. Most importantly, the entering transfer student has critical academic progress and planning information before classes begin. Computerizing the transfer evaluation process provides not only better advising information, but also gives the advisor more time for interpersonal interaction with the entering transfer student.

*Touch-Tone Telephone (TTT) Technology and First-Year Advising*

Telephone registration continues to be a very successful program because almost everyone in the country has access to a touch-tone telephone and because the process gives simple, direct access to the institution's registration system. The success of TTT registration is measured by how well the advising system is integration with registration. Students, especially first-year students, want and need knowledgeable advisors who are both available to and interested in them. It is important that advisors who are involved in student registration know the academic preparation of incoming students and assist in guiding them toward courses which match their academic goals.

TTT registration is only as good as the access to accurate information it provides and the involvement of advisors who are well informed and available when students need them. It must also provide clear and concise materials that guide the entering student through the registration process; TTT registration complements the advising program. For example, institutions need to communicate to entering students what materials and deadlines are forthcoming. That is, after admission, what will the student receive next, when will it arrive, and how is the student expected to respond? This allows the institution to coordinate and prioritize information and effectively control what is important for the entering student to know (Kramer, 1993). Just as important, institutions need to ask what steps are in place, before TTT registration begins, to insure that students are effectively advised.

There is, however, an important downside to TTT: It may enable students to avoid the advising process altogether. That is, an entering student could enroll for courses directly over the telephone without seeing an advisor. To help counter this possibility, some institutions place an advisement hold in the computer on every undergraduate's registration every semester. This hold can be lifted only by the student's advisor. However, once that hold is lifted in the computer, students can register for any course, regardless of recommendations from the advisor, thus bypassing the essence of the advising process and increasing the likelihood of incorrect course selection. Of course, these kinds of problems could lead to delays in graduation. To prevent these negative consequences, students must be urged to use TTT in conjunction with all other academic advising services, not as a substitute for them.

*Degree Progress Reports*

A primary technological tool for advising entering students is the automated degree progress report. Since many first-year students are just entering a degree program, the automated degree progress report does not have immediate application. However, it is essential at entry that first-year students know all requirements and academic expectations. For all users, degree progress reports provide immediate and direct access to curriculum degree requirements and academic records. The user can generate an individual academic progress report on request. Once the computer locates the student's academic record and matches it with degree requirements, the degree progress report should include (a) institutional graduation requirements, (b) major requirements, (c) current enrollment, and (d) an unofficial transcript of all academic work.

Specifically, the computer-generated degree progress report should do the following:

- State graduation requirements and track course completions and deficiencies.
- Categorize requirements within the major (college, department, major, and emphasis).
- Individually tailor and track an approved degree program.
- Track major requirements in groups by class, semester hours, and various combinations.
- Show narrative information.
- Include all institutional, transfer, and other credits such as Advanced Placement (AP),

College Level Examination Program (CLEP), or military.

- Track changes in major requirements each semester.
- Maintain each student's major requirements based on the date of entry into the major.
- Show substitution courses, waivers, and transfer equivalencies.
- Apply current enrollment to graduation requirements.
- Indicate courses that have been repeated.
- Distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable grades (Kramer, Childs, Peterson, & Friday, 1994).

*Student Academic Information Management*

Once the elements of a well defined and integrated advising program are in place, additional steps beyond those described so far can further improve the quality of time spent with students. Degree audits and TTT are good technologies, but they are not sufficient, especially in a dynamic and complex academic delivery system. For example, although TTT registration is a very popular technology, the telephone keypad can limit and burden access to information for some students. The limitation of the degree audit is paper; the information can become outdated almost immediately once it is printed or distributed.

Consider the expansion of course registration as an example of user and machine interface. Because of its limitations, TTT technology cannot allow users to register effectively by need or interest. It simply would take too much time and be extremely cumbersome. Yet, given technological developments, a user can, by interacting with a menu on a terminal screen, enroll in courses to fulfill requirements in which the menu shows a deficiency for that student. If a course is full for the upcoming semester, the user can identify the next time the needed course will be taught.

Academic information management should provide students with critical academic planning information when needed, provide access to student academic information for the entire academic community, and free advisors to individualize services. The idea is to provide the user with a visual exploration of and dynamic interaction with the institution's student information system. A menu of academic items that students should be able to call up instantly includes address/phone changes, graduation applications, class schedules, course availability, grades, transcripts, progress reports (general education and major), instructor schedules, options for majors, PIN number changes, registration, transfer classes, course equivalencies, and transfer work/grades. Using technology to provide students with timely and convenient access to important and personal academic information takes pressure off advisors who would otherwise have to provide mundane data for students. Students can access information themselves and then seek advice from professional staff and faculty members (Kramer et al., 1994).

## Conclusion

The goal of using information technology to enhance academic advising is to make the whole process, from admission to post-enrollment, more student-centered. Information technology cannot and should not replace people in the advising program, but it should be an integral part of the advising process. For the student, information technology gives convenient and timely access to critical academic planning information, immediate feedback, and a sense of control in the advising process. For the advisor, it allows for a student-centered advising program that focuses on student issues and concerns beyond the routine. It provides opportunities to promote student development and creates networks in the academic community to coordinate institutional resources on behalf of entering students. And for the institution, information technology provides clerical relief, professionalizes academic advising programs, supports cost-effective resource management, and minimizes the bureaucratic tendencies of the institution.

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# Appendix

## Automated First-Year Student Profile

**Student:** Joe Student
**Admission Entry Date:** Fall Semester 1994
**Admitted Major:** Psychology

**The Discipline:**

The Department of Psychology offers a program designed to (1) provide knowledge about human behavior, (2) develop skills in the application of psychological principles, and (3) expand the frontiers of knowledge through student/faculty research and scholarly activity.

**Recommended Classes For Psychology Majors:**

Psychology 111
Math 110

**General Education And University Requirements:**

English: It is recommended that you take English 115 or Philosophy 105.

You indicate that you need help in reading or writing skills. BYU has a Reading/Writing Center located in 1010 Jesse Knight Humanities Building (JKHB). You can contact the center at (801) 378-4306.

Math: Because you scored 22 or higher on the ACT Math section, the pre-college math requirement is complete. If you pursue the advanced math option or if your major requires Math 112 or 119, it is recommended that you take Math 110 as preparation.

You indicate that you need help in math. BYU has a math tutoring service found in 60 Knight Mangum Building (KMB), (801) 378-4895. Ask for Jacqueline Taylor-Ortega.

GE Arts & Science: Select courses based on area of interest from page 3 of "The First-Year Registration Guide," an advisement tool you will be receiving shortly.

Religion: Rel A 121, Book of Mormon

Students with scores of 3, 4, or 5 on any Advanced Placement (AP) test should consult page 14 of "The First-Year Registration Guide" to determine fulfillment of general education requirements.

**Extracurricular Activities:**

If you would like to pursue the extracurricular activities which you expressed an interest in on your ACT survey, the following information will be helpful to you:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Student Government | Kerry Hammock | 423 ELWC | (801) 378-3911 |
| Vocal Music | Lila Stuart-Bachelder | E-455 HFAC | (801) 378-3110 |
| Intramural Athletics | Lee Gibbons | 112C RB | (801) 378-6655 |

# CHAPTER 6

# Advising Alliances: Faculty and First-Year Students Team up for Success

Susan H. Frost

A major assumption of this monograph is that when faculty and students work together in the advising process, the likelihood of student success is increased. In this chapter, the model for academic advising which will be examined flows from developmental advising concepts, includes a strong strategic planning component, and encourages students to form alliances with the advisor and others in their collegiate community as they explore and design their future. The effectiveness of the alliance depends on inverting the usual advising pyramid. Rather than building on a base of course selection, scheduling, and registration—thus allowing the major and therefore some aspects of future work to evolve—advisors and students give early consideration to the student's preferences and aspirations. Together they develop a plan to guide students as they explore the major, course work, and schedules that will contribute most to achieving the goals they have set for themselves.

### Current Conditions for Academic Advising

Whether traditional age or adult, most first-year students anticipate the maturing experiences that college brings, and the more thoughtful seek out opportunities to shape their lives. Others who are less mature when they enroll may find that facing the decisions that determine their course of study, their major, and eventually their career choice contributes to the enlarging experience that college should be. Three particular conditions make this an especially appropriate time to look for new advising strategies.

First, students are giving researchers valuable information about themselves. The work of Astin (1993), Tinto (1993), and Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), for example, suggests that involvement and commitment are two attributes of successful students, and willingness to take responsibility for the future may be a third. Students who are involved, committed, and responsible begin planning for the future as early as the first semester. Those who are of traditional age seem very different from popular characterizations of first-year college students which portray them as less prepared, less focused, and less willing to work than their counterparts of a generation ago. Rather, they are purposeful, diligent, and willing to lead

their peers. Many successful adult first-year students differ from stereotypes also. Rather than being hesitant to participate in class discussion or being either unable or unwilling to manage conflicting roles, they contribute valuable perspectives to group discussion and manage multiple roles with impressive skill. Although college is challenging, these students seem to find the resources they need to manage change and discover success (Frost, in press; Simpson & Frost, 1993).

A second condition for implementing improved advising strategies flows from a growing commitment to teaching. On many campuses, faculty are re-examining the nature and extent of their obligation to undergraduates (Cole, 1993; Rhodes, 1994). When asked about the balance between teaching and research, 90% of faculty list teaching as their principal activity, and 72% report that their interest leans toward teaching. Sixty-two percent believe that teaching effectiveness should be the primary criterion for promotion and tenure. By example, these faculty refute the views of critics who charge that faculty ignore undergraduates, preferring instead to devote their time and energies to "mundane research" (Sykes, 1988). Although many academicians believe that publication, not excellent teaching, leads to tenure, year after year countless faculty give guidance to undergraduates both inside the classroom and in more informal settings (Astin, Dey, & Korn, 1991; Boyer, 1990).

The third condition flows from the changing expectations that college graduates face. Today's graduates will live and work in a world that we can only imagine. New environmental, technological, and demographic realities will help shape a reality in which workers will manage information systems and refine processes as a matter of course. This future now demands new requirements for the college curriculum and for the entire learning experience. As paths to the student's new reality, both the curriculum and programs that influence every student's college experience–orientation, academic advising, and seminars for first-year student–should focus on preparing students for the future they face.

Following their study of the difference college makes, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) found that contact between faculty and students outside the classroom results in positive outcomes for students. For example, there is significant positive association between informal contact with faculty and students' educational aspirations, attitudes toward college, academic achievement, intellectual and personal development, and persistence (Pascarella, 1980). Therefore programs that provide informal connecting points for faculty and students have special value. Although informal contact seems to contribute to both academic and personal development, contact that extends intellectual interaction with faculty has special influence on the achievement and intellectual development of first-year students. When faculty advise, the advising relationship fosters such contact. Consequently, advising by faculty can become a program of unique importance and distinction.

**Academic Advising: A Valuable Learning Path**

As indicated in Chapter 3, orientation, first-year seminars, and academic advising are especially important to first-year student success. These activities introduce students to their new community, help establish early and meaningful contact with others, and provide gateways to the curriculum. Unfortunately, "How to Make Informed Choices" is not a course most first-year students have completed, and many lack the skills they need to make the decisions that will influence their college experience and future lives. Such skill development underlies many programs for first-year students. At their best, these programs are mutually supportive. They are most effective when they involve students not just before enrollment, or in the first few weeks of college, but throughout the first year and beyond.

Thus far in this monograph, the focus has been on the timing, structure, format, and content of academic advising. However, all of these strategies are even more powerful when built upon a strong alliance between the student and the advisor. The academic advising relationship is one of the few out-of-class, one-to-one relationships

between students and faculty that is organized around students' academic programs. As we set about helping students, advising alliances must assume a central role in any comprehensive advising program.

Before we investigate the advising alliance model, it is instructive to recall Habley's (1993) analysis of the current state of advising. Although Habley uncovered some gains in advising effectiveness, these gains are incremental at best. In 1992, only 60% of institutions had a written policy statement on advising, and significant numbers of these did not include defined goals, objectives, or methods for evaluation. Often advising is a low-status, low-priority activity that fails to meet the needs of students or of institutions. Some advising offices, for example, describe being in a state of chaos.

However, other evidence indicates that interest in creating and sustaining effective programs is strong. Even though many programs are understaffed and underbudgeted, an increasing number of presidents, provosts, and deans recognize that the teaching mission must be strengthened and acknowledge advising as an essential source of support. During recent consulting experiences of the author, institutional officials described their needs in the following ways:

- Those responsible for advising at a major research university are looking for ways to engage faculty in advising first-year students. Their questions: How can faculty be enticed to spend their time counseling students about their academic futures? Are there efficiencies that capitalize on the willingness of some faculty to serve and yet retain aspects of personal attention that students expect to receive?

- The new president of a small university is seeking to enhance the faculty's research mission while not reducing the institution's historically strong devotion to teaching undergraduates. He also seeks to address the needs of a growing number of first-year students who are not prepared academically. His question: Are there advising strategies that address this range of needs without increasing the burden on an already stretched faculty?

- At a liberal arts college long known for its strong commitment to teaching, both the president and the dean recognize that academic support for first-year students is fragmented to the point of ineffectiveness. Although the investment of energy and dollars should be sufficient, students' needs are not fully addressed. Their questions: Can programs be redesigned to better take advantage of the resources already committed to the range of programs? If so, what are the most effective ways to restructure?

- A community college with multiple campuses and a student body that is both increasing and growing more diverse receives a grant to use technology and other strategies to improve advising services. Project directors wonder how best to invest the funds. Recognizing the growing needs of all students, how can long-term change be guaranteed? What initial changes will mean the most to students?

Although their institutions have different missions and different realities, the officials asking these questions have much in common. In a climate of static or shrinking resources, they seek ways to initiate immediate change *and* enhance long-term effectiveness. Even though the strategies they adopt are varied, they work toward similar ends: an advising alliance in which faculty and first-year students team up for success, based upon the concept of developmental advising.

### Developmental Advising

Developmental academic advising was advocated more than 20 years ago by Burns Crookston (1972) and Terry O'Banion (1972), two scholars whose thinking about these issues was ahead of its time. Developmental academic advising as defined by these scholars and expanded by others in the intervening years is a dynamic relationship between the student and the advisor. The heart of the relationship is shared responsibility for the advising process

and for the coherent educational planning that should result. Educational planning is a real life-learning opportunity for students to practice reasoning, interacting with others and the environment, solving problems, making decisions, and evaluating the results of decisions. Students' long-term as well as immediate goals are important.

Developmental advising was designed to replace traditional, or prescriptive, academic advising. Prescriptive advising is a more static relationship built on the authority of the advisor and the limitations of the student (Crookston, 1972). Used widely when colleges and universities stood *in loco parentis*, prescriptive advising is now merely a mechanism to facilitate course selection, scheduling, and registration.

Developmental advising, on the other hand, is organized around two broad principles: Higher education provides opportunities for people to plan for self-fulfilling lives, and teaching includes any experience that contributes to personal growth and can be evaluated (Crookston, 1972). Making decisions and solving problems are natural activities for developmentally advised students, whose skills should increase as they move through the curriculum. Ideally, seniors need less guidance than first-year students, because the attitudes and skills seniors have developed should help them investigate career choices, plan for a first job, and make other choices that will help shape their future (Frost, 1991a).

Although Crookston (1972) and O'Banion (1972) put forth their ideas before Tinto (1993), Astin (1993), and Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) began publishing their findings, developmental advising seems to anticipate their work by taking advantage of student involvement and the positive aspects of out-of-class interaction between students and faculty. To date, research on specific outcomes is scant, but reported findings offer clues about its potential strengths. In one study, students who were developmentally advised exhibited more growth on a test of critical thinking skills than students who were prescriptively advised (Frost 1991b).

When asked about their specific advising practices and attitudes, developmental advisors revealed that attitude is more important than practice and that process is more important than product. These advisors use the advising relationship to (a) involve students in their college experiences, (b) explore with students the factors that lead to success, and (c) show interest in students' academic progress and extracurricular achievement. Developmental advisors rarely make decisions for students. Instead, they encourage students to (a) ask open-ended questions, (b) use campus resources to find answers, and (c) plan courses of study and schedules around the outcomes of their explorations (Frost, 1993).

These findings support earlier research on students' preferences. Students want a personal relationship with advisors and prefer that the relationship concern academic and not personal matters (Fielstein, 1987, 1989). Therefore, developmental advisors and students seem to seek the same outcome—a relationship based on academics that helps students plan coherently for the future.

These concepts are especially important for advisors of first-year students to consider. Advisors offer connecting points to first-year students' new intellectual and social environment. At times the connections are formal ones. For example, orientation and advising can be integrated processes, as can seminars for first-year students and advising. In other cases, offerings are not formally linked, and it is up to students to make connections. In any case, advisors can enhance students' understanding of the fitting-in process, a most valuable step in becoming a vital part of the college community.

### Building Effective Academic Advising Programs

Habley's (1993) finding that only 60% of advising programs have a written policy statement reveals a serious shortcoming on many campuses. Today, programs with a mission that contributes to the effectiveness of the institution, with collectively achieved goals that address the mission, and with well-defined plans to meet the goals are

more likely to receive and retain support than are programs that go forward in generalized, random ways; successful programs have a blueprint and more. Their purpose is so thoroughly considered and widely understood that it provides an atmosphere in which advisors and program planners can capitalize on each available resource—including their own time and energy.

Strong plans flow from a mission, and a strong mission is crafted by those who best know the institution. The mission for the academic advising program should support the mission of the university or college. To help planners, the Council for the Advancement of Standards (1986) has put forward the following mission with respect to advising. Using this and the institutional mission as starting points, advising participants can begin the planning process.

**Mission Statement for Academic Advising**

- The primary purpose of an academic advising program is to assist students in the development of meaningful educational plans [which are] compatible with their life goals.
- The institution must have a clearly written statement of philosophy pertaining to academic advising, which must include program goals and set forth expectations of advisors and advisees.
- Academic advising should be viewed as a continuous process of clarification and evaluation.
- The ultimate responsibility for making decisions about life goals and educational plans rests with the individual student. The academic advisor assists by helping to identify and assess alternatives and the consequences of decisions.

Institutional goals for academic advising (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 1986) may include:

- Clarification of life and career goals.
- Development of educational plans.
- Selection of appropriate courses and other educational experiences.
- Interpretation of institutional requirements.
- Increasing student awareness of educational resources available.
- Evaluation of student progress toward established goals.
- Development of decision-making skills.
- Referral to and use of other institutional and community support services, where appropriate.
- Collecting and distributing student data regarding student needs, preferences, and performance for use in institutional policy making.

Who takes part in the conversation? The constituencies that create, support, or use the advising process should be represented. These constituencies include program directors; faculty advisors; students; those who work with supporting programs such as orientation, career counseling, or residence life; and those who control advising budgets. Developing a mission statement is not a trivial task. Expect to spend several weeks or more on this step, and plan to entertain the passionate exchanges that may occur. Those who craft mission statements establish the process through which the program will develop and improve. If the institutional mission has not been considered for some time, perhaps advising initiatives will provide the impetus for broader-based conversation.

The next steps involve articulating goals and objectives. At this point many questions will come to the table. We tend to look outward for solutions, but often the most creative solutions come from within. The following questions are a sample of those that need discussing:

- Who are the students we teach and advise? What traits and circumstances define their needs?

- Who are our advisors? What strengths do they bring to students and to the program?
- What structures will best serve us?
- Within these structures, how can we meet the needs of students, the institution, and link all available resources?
- How will we measure the effectiveness of what we do? What indicators will let us know that students' needs are being met?

When committed stakeholders address these questions thoughtfully, an exciting process begins. For example:

- The needs of students, and not the needs of institutions, emerge as driving forces.
- Diversity among students and advisors becomes a strategic advantage.
- Measuring effectiveness leads to continuous improvement.

This last item is a very important one and implies that evaluation should be an integral part of any program.

**Evaluation Keeps the Process Alive**

Due in part to requirements set by accrediting associations by which colleges and universities measure their progress toward becoming more effective institutions, advisement planners are accustomed to designing evaluation processes as central components of any program. In general, evaluation takes one of two forms, and for our purposes, the distinction is important. Some evaluation is summative: It gauges past performance, often for the purpose of qualifying for or exiting a program. Other evaluation is formative: It measures for the purpose of improvement. It is this latter type that interests advisement planners. Only when we know how we are doing can we improve. Strong programs evaluate the full range of their offerings.

Useful evaluation is supportive, not threatening. The people it informs design and manage the evaluation process, and the information gathered forms the basis for future improvement. Unfortunately, advising programs often neglect evaluation, and, in doing so, they ignore potential strengths. In addition to forfeiting the positive change that flows from evaluation, they can fail to win the support of those who control funds. Funding officers are more likely to make favorable decisions about programs that pay attention to performance, as do others who design structures for recognition and reward.

In addition, evaluation designed to enhance potential strengths can contribute to the power of the program. Self-assessment is one useful form. Here advisors are given the opportunity to reflect on the advising year and make mental or written note of their own strengths and weaknesses and those of the program. Then in conversation with each other and with advising planners, they can explore paths to improvement. At the conclusion of the following year, the collectively agreed-upon suggestions can become a basis of evaluative conversations.

A more structured and systematic form of advisor evaluation could be tied to promotion and, for tenure-track faculty, to tenure decisions. Here, assessment of strength as an advisor is part of the overall evaluation that peers, department chairs, and deans conduct in the promotion and tenure process. Structuring evaluation in this way requires wide discussion and careful forethought. Those being evaluated should understand and, ideally, should ratify criteria prior to the performance period.

Another more program-oriented form of evaluation might be carried out by advisees. Student evaluation should take several forms, including a component that asks the student to consider the extent of his or her participation. This approach can affirm the basic principle that advising is a relationship in which both advisor and advisee have responsibilities. Again, it is wise to enlist the help of advisors when constructing an instrument for students to use. This foundation of support pays off when the group considers aggregated results.

### Advising Alliances: The Heart of the Advising Program

As planners ask questions, seek information that they need to design solutions, and take responsibility for program components, they form alliances with first-year students that strengthen the program beyond the level any isolated unit can attain. In doing so, they provide a valuable pattern for advisors and students. Forming their own alliance, advisors and students use advising activities—examining talents and preferences, investigating careers and majors, selecting courses, and then scheduling—as a means through which students practice valuable processes of exploring, planning, implementing, and evaluating. As students plan their program and move through the curriculum, they assume responsibility for both content and process. Then they are better positioned to function independently in the broader world (Frost, 1994).

Advising alliances take advantage of some of the characteristics and situations that first-year students share. Most first-year students manage considerable change; faculty and peers have new expectations of them, and the extent to which they find a "fit" with respect to their work helps determine their academic skill development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Social distractions can threaten academic success, as can perceptions that college is irrelevant. Furthermore, being underprepared academically or being uncertain about majors or careers can cause first-year students to have doubts about college as a whole. Fortunately, there are advising strategies that can help support positive attitudes and dilute the fears of some students (Frost, 1991a).

Many first-year students share these challenges. However, the points on which they differ can be just as important. Some traditional-age, first-year students are members of minority groups, academically underprepared for college work, students with disabilities, student athletes, or international students. Some are adults. Many varied needs help define the initial college experience of all these categories of students (Frost, 1991a). Supportive advisors naturally acknowledge the diversity of first-year students because they view students as individuals who are adjusting to a new situation. Although advisors and instructors might assume that because first-year students experience similar challenges—meeting new friends, getting to know a new place, doing well in the first days of classes—they are sharing their questions. However, many new students feel that they are alone in their uncertainty. Rather than admitting their fears to their new peers, they struggle to appear confident in new situations.

### Sequence and Process: Inverting the Pyramid

How do we combine what we know about developmental advising, strategic planning, and the strengths of alliances into a new advising concept? How do we create new programs or revitalize existing ones? First, consider the following list of advising strategies that one college adopted:

- Establish a caring working relationship.
- Discuss the relevance of higher education and the liberal arts.
- Provide a rationale for distribution requirements.
- Stimulate life and career planning.
- Clarify goals.
- Relate interests and abilities to educational and career plans.
- Assist in choosing a major.
- Help with course selection and scheduling.
- Monitor academic progress.
- Encourage exploration of options and alternatives.
- Encourage extracurricular involvement.
- Function as a referral agent.

At first glance, this list seems to be an admirable one. The first item suggests that the advising

relationship is important, and, therefore, one would expect the program to foster strong faculty-student interaction. Other items suggest that students will be encouraged to look outward as they make choices about the curriculum. But when the activities become objectives, sequence and process are not given appropriate attention. The ordering of the tasks ignores developmental advising concepts.

Developmental advising is hierarchical; it assumes that students who begin college in need of more structured guidance will move to positions of increasing responsibility as they move to the senior year. By revising and reordering priorities, the college achieves a strong developmental advising model. Consider the new continuum:

- Establish a caring working relationship.
- Help students clarify goals.
- Discuss the relevance of higher education and liberal studies.
- Encourage thinking about life and career planning.
- Relate interest and abilities to plans.
- Assist in exploring and selecting majors.
- Provide a rationale for requirements.
- Help select and schedule courses.
- Monitor academic progress.
- Encourage students to explore options, become involved, and use campus resources throughout their time in college.

Reordering establishes a more coherent process, emphasizes the teaching role, and takes advantage of knowledge about first-year students.

Of course, all this has implications for the selection, training, and rewarding of academic advisors. Because this topic is covered in greater detail in Chapter 8, only some basic principles implicit in developmental advising will be reviewed here:

- Academic advisors should be selected on the basis of their knowledge of student development and willingness to use developmental concepts in their advising.
- Training for academic advisors should include developmental advising concepts and how they apply to the advising relationship.
- Recognition and reward of academic advising should reflect an emphasis on developmental advising.

### First Steps toward Change

The first steps can be the most difficult. It is important to define mission early, signaling that the institutional view of advising is changing. Perhaps this is as simple as reordering existing priorities, but a broad-based discussion of goals and objectives is a must. Faculty leaders must be convinced to join the effort. There are few substitutes for their participation.

It is essential to involve all constituencies in planning. Each is an important stakeholder, and the shared work can nurture bridges that will become a strength of the program. Strong working relationships between academic affairs and student affairs, faculty and professional advisors, or faculty and peer advisors, for example, lead to strong alliances, and these gains can influence other efforts.

Blending group and individual advising is another useful strategy. As advising becomes a teaching process, group advising allows an expanded mission to be achieved. In this situation, peer advisors can make special contributions, but if peers serve, then training, continuous supervision, and feedback about specific performance are essential program elements.

While focusing on desired outcomes, effective evaluation is continuous. Non-threatening, formative approaches can ensure ongoing program improvement, especially when self-evaluation by advisors is one component of the design.

Effective advising alliances, based upon the concepts of developmental advising, do much more than schedule classes. The relationships around which these alliances are built become arenas in which first-year students practice decision-making skills and gradually assume responsibility for planning their career, major, and curriculum, especially when faculty are involved. The bottom line is that both the institution and the first-year student benefit from effective advising alliances.

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# CHAPTER 7

# Faculty Mentoring: A Key to First-Year Student Success

Gary L. Kramer, John S. Tanner, & Erlend D. Peterson

In his book, *College, The Undergraduate Experience in America*, Ernest Boyer (1987) describes several "tensions" found in American colleges that negatively influence the quality of the undergraduate experience. One persistent tension identified by Boyer is that undergraduates report being "treated like numbers in a book." Such institutional practices disenfranchise students and thwart their success and retention. Since entering students face many new issues and problems as they enroll in college, the last thing they need is to be treated like a number.

As discussed often in this monograph, the first year of college is a time of transition and adjustment, and the early weeks of the first semester are especially decisive. Clearly, support during this time is crucial, because new students are vulnerable to changes in academic plans and generally unfamiliar with institutional resources. Early interventions should match students with institutional resources in a personalized way.

This chapter is about establishing early first-year student-faculty contact. Minimally, each entering student should be introduced to a faculty member who, in turn, knows him or her by name and personalizes college life to that student. Just as importantly, the president of the institution plays a vital role in creating a personalized environment for first-year students as they make the transition to college.

## Context

A student development point of view encourages educators to focus less on what they do and more on what the student needs and does. Williams (1986) suggests that institutions examine the effects of interaction between the student and the institution. The better the integration of students, the greater their commitment to the college and to the goal of graduation (Pascarella, 1986). Tinto (1987) observed: "Given individual characteristics, prior experiences, and commitments,. . . it is the individual's integration into the academic and social systems of the college that most directly relates to his continuance in that college" (p. 96).

The frequency and quality of faculty-student interaction significantly affect student

satisfaction with the college experience. Regular faculty-student interaction increases student academic success, satisfaction, and retention (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1987). Furthermore, Astin (1993) found that faculty-student interaction has its strongest positive correlations in satisfaction of students with both the faculty and the quality of instruction. As the barriers preventing faculty-student interaction are removed, studies confirm positive correlations with all other areas of student intellectual and personal development, as well as with a variety of positive personality and attitudinal outcomes (Astin, 1993). In summary, faculty-student interaction is an important factor in student achievement, persistence, academic skill development, personal development, and general satisfaction with the college experience (Volkwein, King, & Terenzini, 1986).

All institutions face the challenge of meeting entering students' wide range of needs and skills. This calls for sensitive, knowledgeable people in the institution to help students understand how their needs, preparation, and goals fit with the identity and requirements of the institution, a requisite for student academic success. For example, helping students take active responsibility for their education may depend on how well the institutions' goals mesh with the goals students hold for themselves (Stark, 1990).

Studies have advocated faculty-student mentoring as invaluable in the educational process, particularly in assisting students in conducting self-exploration, clarifying values, and gaining personal identity. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) concluded that there is considerable evidence that faculty influence on students is enhanced when those interactions extend beyond the classroom. For first-year students, academic fit is enhanced when faculty-student interaction strengthens the personal bonds between the student and the institution, thereby increasing the likelihood of social integration and persistence.

What does all this research mean in practical terms for faculty and students? Two principles emerge. First, faculty should develop a caring attitude and personal regard for entering students. Long after students have forgotten the information and advice faculty have given them, they will remember the gift of self. Second, faculty can act as a bellwether for both the institution and the student. Sara Looney (1988) suggests that faculty members are most able to act as bellwethers when there is consistent contact with students. Faculty can serve as agents of change because they see the effects of policy, procedures, and decisions on both students and other facets of the institution. Students and the system often meet face-to-face, if not head to head, in faculty offices. Faculty can best represent the institution to the student and the student to the institution.

### Helping First-Year Students to Succeed

Faculty and administrative leaders can combine forces to identify ways to improve the first-year experience. Frost (1993) asks, "How can we design first-year student experiences and first-year advising so that more entering students are successful in their academic work?" (p. 21). Some first-year students leave college after only a few weeks because the transition is so stressful. Yet, as pointed out frequently in this monograph, involved students are less likely to drop out (Noel, Levitz, & Saluri, 1990). Beneficial activities, such as discussing intellectual issues with faculty, enhance first-year student commitment to educational goals. Such situations can help first-year students adjust to college, think creatively and critically, and take responsibility for their lives. Faculty who ask first-year students questions (such as, What do you want most at this college? What do you want to do with your life?) encourage entering students to think about their future and plan for it. Learning can take place in faculty advisor-student relationships, and advising can be a form of teaching (Frost, 1993).

Academic administrators and faculty who encourage entering students to get involved in college, who press them to study hard and learn, and who display a genuine interest in their progress make a significant difference in the retention of students. Especially during student orientation and in follow-up interactions,

substantive sessions with a faculty member could focus on a student's academic and personal goals and on the need for diligent study.

For example, at the University of Oregon, under the leadership of its president, much of the entering class is formed into First-Year Student Interest Groups (FIGs). Up to 30 students take classes together in areas of common interest. This provides the opportunity for entering students to become acquainted with one another in a "human-sized" setting, despite their enrollment at a large institution. A faculty member is assigned to each FIG, thereby giving students a point of contact (Brand, 1992). This idea is developed further in this monograph in Chapter 10 by Goodsell Love and Tinto.

Many other campus initiatives are successful in bringing together faculty and first-year students in a variety of programs and structures. Some institutions have implemented a reader program in which entering students are given a compilation of articles to read—either prior to enrollment, during the opening week, or throughout the semester—on social, ethical, and educational issues. Faculty and students begin conversations based on the reader. Years ago the University of Notre Dame established the office of Dean of Freshmen and supports that function even more so today. This program is notable for the *Freshman Year Academic Guide* and *Freshman Newsletters* that go to entering students and their parents. Other institutions, such as Penn State University, Ball State University, and the University of Rhode Island have created a Division of Undergraduate Studies with similar responsibilities that focus on the same kind of first-year student concerns as those found at Notre Dame. The University of Wisconsin established a six-week evaluation period which marks the most critical time for entering students. Each student is contacted and asked (a) to provide feedback on advising, registration, and course work, (b) to express their individual concerns, and (c) to state how the institution can assist them in this first six weeks. First-year students at the University of Rochester become involved in "Freshman Ventures and Preceptorials," a multidisciplinary introduction to college study via seminars and single courses. Syracuse University offers a similar program entitled the "Freshman Forum: An Intimate Learning Experience." Virginia Commonwealth University offers an integrative curriculum called "English Prompts," in which entering students respond in writing to several questions throughout the semester about their views regarding student life, needs, goals, interests, and concerns.

**The President as First-Year Student Mentor**

Most of the aforementioned programs emphasize first-year student-faculty contact which assures entering students that they matter and that the institution is dedicated to their success. However, the tone and direction of this interaction often is established by the president of the institution. As the academic leaders of the institution show commitment to and become involved in first-year student success, others in the academic community are bound to follow. On the other hand, first-year student efforts are doomed from the start when they are limited to centrally run administrative programs. Faculty allegiances to their own academic disciplines can also hamper first-year programs; however, these differences can be overcome by enlisting the entire academic community in revitalizing the first-year experience.

These concepts are incorporated into the Freshman-Faculty Mentor Program at Brigham Young University. This campus-wide initiative is coordinated and supported by the central administration, but administered and shaped by each academic college. After reviewing several studies on the first-year experience, college and university leaders, including academic deans, vice-presidents, and the president, concluded that the critical period for first-year students is the first few weeks of college, and that faculty play a critical role in first-year students' decisions to stay or leave. University leaders decided that every entering student—all 4,600 of them—should be assigned to a faculty member. The president, vice-president, and deans were the first to volunteer to be first-year student mentors. The objective was simple—to put a human face on what can seem to first-year students an intimidating, impersonal environment. The faculty mentor program is designed

to assure that all entering students have personal contact with a faculty member *who knows them by name*. The mentor is to give perspective on college and university life and to serve as an ally for students as they make the transition to college.

Faculty mentors are selected and assigned by colleges and departments. They may be drawn not only from full-time faculty but also from emeriti and seasoned part-time faculty. Mentors provide a vital human resource for entering students, helping them to adjust to college and university life. The program was intentionally designed to be simple: to involve faculty but not to consume them. Contacts with first-year students are also designed to be simple: once by mail before they arrive on campus, once at New Student Orientation, and at least once more during the early weeks of the first semester. This contact takes many forms—over a meal, at the faculty member's home, in a classroom, or at a film, forum, or concert. During and immediately following these contacts, the entering student is introduced to other resources in the institution.

So that faculty are not burdened with paperwork and other logistical or organizational concerns, the institution's student information system (described in greater detail in Chapter 5), under the direction of the academic vice-president, provides individualized information on each entering student. The Freshman Faculty-Mentor Program has modest objectives and makes modest demands on the faculty; yet the symbolic value to entering students is decisive. For students, it personalizes their entry into the college and university. Mentors give perspective on college and university life. It gives faculty a chance to share their experiences, to learn firsthand about first-year student concerns, and to show that first-year students matter in a large bureaucratic college and university.

### Conclusion

The first step in reemphasizing undergraduate education involves renewing faculty members' commitment to and identification with their own home campuses. To assure entering students high quality academic integration, the faculty must not only be invited back to the academic community, but they also will need to look beyond their disciplines. This can happen only if the faculty culture evolves toward a renewed commitment to the first-year student experience. Linking faculty to first-year students can renew faculty attention to the student experience in the institution rather than in the faculty's own department and classes.

The Freshman-Faculty Mentor Program described above illustrates the value of taking faculty beyond the departmental classroom. For example, a professor of English who mainly teaches upper division courses on Shakespeare commented after his experience as a faculty mentor, "The next time I'm asked to teach a first-year student course, I'll do it differently." Because of his experience as mentor of first-year students, he observed anew the personal need to restructure the general education courses (or first-year student courses) he is asked to teach. For him and some other faculty mentors, general education took on new importance in the education of first-year students.

A professor of physics went beyond the scope of the program and learned something about first-year student needs and concerns. He helped clarify housing policies and helped two first-year students with an apartment dilemma. In the evaluation of his faculty mentor experience, he said, "I got a call from one of my first-year students who complained that the beds in her apartment were inadequate. Furthermore, it seemed that the management was unwilling to do anything about it. They were bunk beds, and upon examination, I could see they were unsafe. I brought them sleeping bags until we could get the problem resolved. With some intervention on my part, the beds were replaced, and life for the two first-year students resumed without sleeping bags."

These and other efforts by faculty verify to students, their families, and the faculty that first-year students matter, and that the institution is committed to helping them succeed. They are symbolic of the renewed commitment of an institution to its first-year students. Faculty are

brought back into the mainstream of undergraduate education and given a chance not only to share their experiences, but to learn firsthand about new student concerns.

As institutions and leaders seek to strengthen the first-year student experience, what must be done? First, institutions must make it clear to everyone that new students are admitted to succeed. Second, faculty must be integrated as advisors or mentors of first-year students, with academic leaders and the president leading the way. Third, the first year must become a window to help entering students explore the meaning of learning and to increase academic fit. And finally, the resources of institutions must be marshalled to create bridges and improve strategies for first-year student success.

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# CHAPTER 8

# Selecting, Training, Rewarding, and Recognizing Faculty Advisors

Robert E. Glennen & Faye N. Vowell

Much of what has been discussed thus far in this monograph is based on the assumption that faculty involvement in academic advising is one of the most important factors in building successful first-year student academic advising programs. To be sure, there are advising models suggested that do not include faculty; but on the whole, at most institutions, faculty assume the major responsibility for advising first-year students.

The faculty model, however, is not without its drawbacks. As pointed out by King and Kerr in Chapter 4, the major weakness of using faculty members as academic advisors is that they may lack the comprehensive knowledge or necessary interest to advise students, especially first-year students. One of the other reasons that some faculty fail to provide effective academic advising is that they are not offered appropriate training to do the job or they are not rewarded or recognized in meaningful ways. This chapter discusses how to select faculty for advising roles, how to provide them with appropriate training, and how to reward them for their advising efforts.

## Context

As discussed in earlier chapters, faculty advisors are a valuable and often unrecognized resource in student retention efforts, particularly in regard to first-year students who are the most vulnerable to attrition. Noel (1978) found that students who receive effective academic advising feel positive about the whole institution. O'Banion (1972) found that an institution's commitment to academic advising is more important, with respect to retention, than who does the actual advising. Habley (1993) reported that 75% of the advising done in American higher education is done by faculty members. This substantiates an earlier report by Carstensen (1979) which indicated that 79% of all advising programs are maintained by faculty. Yet, Habley also found that comparatively few institutions reward or train their advisors. Grites (1977) and Glennen (1975, 1983, 1991) provide evidence that utilizing academic advising programs involving faculty advisors results in higher retention of students, higher graduation rates, fewer academic and personal problems, and an increase in academic achievement.

A strategic plan created to address academic advising will vary from institution to institution, generally taking advantage of institutional strengths. Dameron and Wolf (1974), Mash (1978), Glennen and Baxley (1985a), Cavender (1990), Lammers and Fielstein (1992), Stokes (1992), Franke and Cooper (1992), Raney and Hanson (1993), and Teitelbaum (1994) report on specific models used at various colleges and universities across the country which increase student retention, improve the campus environment, create greater student satisfaction, and improve the effectiveness of institutional academic advising.

One model that has been shown to be effective, particularly with underprepared students, is intrusive advising. This faculty-based advising model, originated by Robert Glennen and his associates (Glennen, 1975, 1983, 1991; Glennen & Baxley, 1985b) assumes the institution must take the initiative. Advisors do not wait for students to come forward to ask for help, but request that students make frequent appointments throughout the year, allowing the advisor to check on student progress continually, identify students in crisis situations, offer options, make referrals, and motivate students toward academic success. (See Chapter 11 for a more detailed discussion of this advising model).

However, the model most suitable for an institution will be the one that fits its individual characteristics, students, and faculty. NACADA's Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising (see Appendix A) is a useful point of departure for all types of institutions because it establishes universal expectations for advisor interaction with a variety of audiences. However, each institution should formulate an advising plan and policy which meets the needs of its students. This philosophy of advising should be stated in the institution's mission statement and included in the catalogue for all constituencies to read.

### Selection and Training of Advisors

On many campuses, academic faculty advisors are assigned according to a student's major, often on the basis of equal advisee loads. This practice can be a disadvantage, however, for departments with a large number of majors or for departments on a campus where faculty do not consider academic advising to be important. When students meet with advisors under these circumstances, it is primarily for course selection only.

Not all faculty can be good advisors. In selecting faculty to advise first-year students, a number of traits are highly desirable. Faculty who exhibit an open, friendly manner and a sincere liking for students are usually the best advisors; they are also often the best teachers and, indeed, the best faculty members. These are the faculty who attend student functions on nights and weekends, who sponsor student activities, and who seem to have cordial interactions with the variety of diverse faculty on any given campus. They are often those faculty who are willing to try new strategies in their teaching and admit mistakes or errors.

In a centralized advising center, faculty who are chosen to advise are those who possess the above qualities and have shown an interest in and success with advising students. They should be assigned to the advising center through consultations between the director of the center and the department chair, although the director will often have discussed the appointment with the faculty members ahead of time and will have invited them to sit in on training sessions or actual advising sessions. The advisors are selected because of their positive qualities, not because their department would like to have them out of the classroom.

Most faculty members are not trained advisors and, therefore, need to be provided with preservice and regular in-service programs to assist them in developing advising skills. This is especially true for faculty who work with first-year students. In these training sessions, advisors are given information on procedures, strategies for advising sessions, common problems, and campus rules and regulations. They may also be exposed to individual and group advising techniques, questioning and listening skills, referral skills, or student development theory.

Advisors, especially advisors of first-year students, should become aware of the specific needs and learning preferences of entering students as well as relevant student development theory. The theories and developmental issues discussed by Upcraft in Chapter 2 should be part of the advisor training program. In-service sessions often include invited guests such as counselor educators; psychologists; student personnel workers; directors of cooperative education, student financial aid, freshman composition, and honors programs; and sometimes outside experts from national associations.

Most often faculty can easily see the need for training in such "nuts and bolts" topics as campus rules and regulations. They are frequently most comfortable dispensing facts like the requirements for a major. Yet even these facts need to be updated at least annually as programs change; this rate of change necessitates consistent, regular advisor training.

Faculty tend to be less comfortable with the affective or relational aspects of advising. A thorough grounding in student development theory can make faculty members more comfortable, especially if they are inclined to work from theory to practice in their teaching or academic disciplines. Role playing or discussion of case studies with other faculty advisors can be effective ways of allowing faculty to discover their own comfort level in dealing with issues that may prove the greatest obstacles to their first-year advisees. These obstacles range from roommate problems and homesickness for traditional-age students, to adjustment to a predominantly white campus on the part of minority students, to concerns for child care and finances on the part of a single parent returning to school after a number of years in the work force.

Advisors of first-year students need to help their advisees set goals, gather information, articulate choices, choose alternatives, and evaluate the success of their choices. Referral skills are often crucial to advisors because their advisees need to draw on the resources of the entire campus to deal with issues confronting them. Advisors may also need to practice questioning and listening skills in order to be able to ask probing questions and "listen between the lines" as a student articulates a problem or concern. For example, a question about dropping a class might really signal the need for help with time management or study skills. A good first-year student advisor can learn when and how to probe and what sources of help the school offers in these areas.

An additional element of advisor training is the use of computers and technology. Some programs utilize computer systems to provide advice to college students relative to various majors (Maples & Grupe, 1992). Hart (1993) describes how advisors use internet resources to provide academic advising. Ford and Ford (1993) describe the process of creating an advising handbook, storing it on the computer, and utilizing a hands-on approach to provide campus information. Each faculty advisor should have computer access to students' academic records, their progress toward a degree, and the courses needed in a specific major. Chapter 5 in this monograph provides a more detailed discussion of the application of computer information technology to academic advising.

An advisor training program should be a fully conceptualized and systematic series of faculty interactions that are guided by the institution's mission and philosophy in regard to advising. Expectations of the role of advisors should be clear from institutional documents such as the catalogue and faculty handbook. The training program should be based on a needs assessment of advisors and of the population of advisees. A thorough evaluation or assessment effort needs to be a part of the original planning, and results should be used in the planning of subsequent programs. Such an effort fits well into the outcomes assessment efforts on many campuses and is fully compatible with the demands for continuous quality improvement.

A centralized advising center staffed by faculty can encourage respect and trust across departmental, college, and school boundaries within the institution. Advisors quickly come to see themselves as student advocates whose primary goal is to serve the students, provide them with the best advice possible, and not to protect their

own department's turf. As the advisors rotate back to their upper division colleges after a term of service in the advising center, advising becomes improved throughout the institution.

### Rewards and Recognition

One of the reasons faculty avoid academic advising is that they believe they are not properly rewarded for their efforts. Most often, this means that academic advising is not an important part of promotion and tenure criteria, or is missing altogether. Particularly for younger faculty seeking tenure, the marginalization or absence of academic advising in promotion or tenure policies is a strong deterrent to doing academic advising at all, or doing it well. This is particularly true at research universities, where scholarly publications dominate promotion and tenure policies.

If academic advising is incorporated into the promotion and tenure process, there is a clear message to everyone that academic advising is important, recognized, and rewarded. If not, there is always the possibility of strengthening academic advising in the formal reward system, but this is a slow, frustrating and often unsuccessful effort. Nevertheless, if faculty are to take advising seriously, the criteria for promotion and tenure, as well as merit increases, should include effective advising. This assumes, however, that effective advising can be described and evaluated, which is not an easy task.

A major problem, of course, is reaching agreement on the criteria to be used in evaluating academic advising. These standards will vary with each institution, but in general, process criteria (e.g., accessibility and satisfaction) as well as outcome criteria (e.g., retention and student knowledge) should be included. In centralized advising centers which use faculty, the director should evaluate each advisor each semester, or at least once a year. The primary source of information about effective advising, of course, should be advisees themselves, through surveys, individual interviews, or focus groups. Supervisor evaluations are also important. Self-evaluations such as reflective essays and advising portfolios which parallel or interrelate with teaching portfolios can also be very useful. The results of these evaluations should be shared with the faculty advisor's academic department chair, and should become part of the faculty member's portfolio forwarded to the academic leadership of the institution. When advising is done at the departmental level, the responsibility for evaluating academic advising falls to the department chair. [For a more detailed discussion of evaluation of academic advising, see Chapter 15. See also Glennen, (1983); Cavender, (1990); and Lammers & Fielstein, (1992)].

Regardless of the importance of academic advising in the reward system, institutions should be creative in developing other ways to recognize and reward academic advisors. For example, financial remuneration could be provided. Faculty members who are interested in advising could be paid additional overload salaries or receive merit pay for their willingness to go over and above the normal call of duty. They also can be compensated additionally for doing academic advising in the summer rather than, or in addition to, teaching classes.

Faculty can also be nominated for national recognition such as the annual Outstanding Advisor Awards given by the American College Testing Program and NACADA. Local awards or awards in the various schools or colleges could be established. If the campus culture does not lend itself to establishing such awards, a systematic recognition could be given to all faculty advisors: Students could take advisors to lunch in the campus dining hall for a reduced amount, or an "advisors week" could be established.

Faculty do need to receive special recognition for their willingness to undertake the academic advising role. Not everyone has the personality to be a good advisor, and recognition and encouragement needs to be given to those who do get involved. Kramer (1987) discusses motivations and incentives for promoting faculty members' sense of accomplishment and productivity, and he suggests that institutions individualize the incentive by allowing advisors the freedom to choose when and how to use the rewards. He also recommends that faculty be allowed to participate in the management of the advising program.

The centralized advising center should evaluate its program of advising in addition to evaluating individual advisors. Student evaluations are one source which can be used to do this. Taken together they give an overview of student opinion and of reaction to the advising they receive. Chapter 15 includes annotations of instruments which can be used for that purpose. For example, Vowell and Karst (1987) indicate basic student satisfaction with an intrusive advising system and offer a model for conducting such an evaluation. Other resources available for evaluating an advising program include *CAS Standards and Guidelines for Student Support Services/Development Programs* (1986) and the *ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising* (Habley, 1993), among many others.

### Summary and Conclusions

Colleges and universities across the country are facing difficult enrollment and fiscal situations. Quality first-year academic advising performed by faculty who are properly selected, trained, and rewarded pays real dividends in terms of student satisfaction and retention. Faculty advisors should be selected who value academic advising and who are willing to participate in training programs designed to improve their effectiveness. Academic advising should also be rewarded, preferably as part of promotion and tenure policies, but if not, through other meaningful rewards and recognition. As pointed out throughout this monograph, effective academic advising and meaningful faculty-student contact are critical elements in the success of first-year students.

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# CHAPTER 9

# Reach-Out Advising Strategies for First-Year Students

Derrell Hart

The assumption that entering students will voluntarily seek out academic advising and assistance when they need it is an inaccurate and harmful belief; but, nevertheless, it is one that is shared by many academic advisors. This chapter examines certain unfortunate realities of collegiate life which often limit the effectiveness of academic advising services for entering students. The case is made here that successful academic advising for entering students requires that programs extend beyond faculty offices and advising centers during normal office hours to locations where students live and congregate, such as residence halls on residential campuses; high-traffic areas such as student centers and major academic buildings; and major indoor and outdoor campus thoroughfares. Failure of the institution to reach beyond the traditional means of delivering academic advising means that many students will continue to advise themselves and will depend on untrained peers for advising information and counsel. The result can be potentially harmful both to the student's immediate academic performance and to his or her long-term academic success as well as to the college or university's retention goals.

## Problems with Traditional Academic Advising Delivery Systems

The reasons why entering students succeed or fail in college are fairly well understood. We know, for example, that a caring attitude on the part of faculty and staff contributes to student retention; that students are more likely to drop out if they are bored, lack academic focus, are unprepared for specific courses, experience difficulty in the transition from high school to college, or are uncertain about their major or course of study (Levitz & Noel, 1990). Often, it is the institution's academic advising program that is assigned frontline responsibility for coordinating campus-wide efforts to address these needs.

Before proceeding to a discussion of ideas and programs for extending academic advising for first-year students, several factors that limit the effectiveness of traditional models of academic service delivery must be considered. Some of these factors include (a) faulty assumptions about student readiness for information, (b) excessive segmentation of services resulting from organizational structure, (c) overspecialization into

professional units, (d) unnecessary limits on methods of service delivery, and (e) inadequate knowledge about the attitudes and characteristics of entering students.

Academic advising, for example, is most often the responsibility of academic units, and it is typically assumed that the academic advising needs of students relate to specific courses or, at least, areas of study. In reality, entering students often do not have a real major area of study in mind, except perhaps a preference for mathematics or sciences versus the humanities or social sciences. This suggests that entering college students, at a minimum, should have ready access to persons trained as career counseling and advising generalists rather than only to discipline-based advisors.

Similarly, it is often assumed that students enter college focused on academics and ready to absorb the academic information that is offered. Typically, a few days are carved out of the summer and early fall to provide information to entering students about the opportunities, expectations, and support services of the institution, but students are seldom ready for this information. The personal trauma associated with entering a new life stage in an unfamiliar setting makes it difficult for students to separate, from all they see and hear, the important from the less important. Nevertheless, students are presented with a vast array of office representatives and materials, each striving to impress the new student with the *essential* information they have to offer. The best that is to be expected from early orientation programs is that the immediate needs and concerns of students will be addressed and that a few important bits of information will be retained for future reference as personal needs evolve. Fortunately, as students exchange information with their friends throughout the year, the pool of shared information (and, unfortunately, perhaps misinformation) about institutional programs and procedures grows.

There are other problems interfering with successful academic advising. Often, office responsibilities overlap, and coordination among offices is lacking. As student service offices become increasingly specialized, it becomes harder to recognize that the "whole student" comes to college. Offices responsible for residence halls, orientation, career or personal counseling, learning assistance, and academic advising, may all have a specialized responsibility for students' transition to college, and it is sometimes difficult for individual students, even if they recognize their specific needs, to select among the various services. Similarly, persons responsible for specific services may fail to recognize the need of an individual student for services offered elsewhere in the institution.

Persons responsible for delivering academic advising programs to first-year students, whether they work in autonomous offices or serve as coordinators for faculty advising systems, should not allow themselves to think about advising as simply formal advising presentations and the offer of services to those students coming to their offices for assistance. It is naive to expect students new to the collegiate environment to take the primary initiative to seek the needed information at the exact time they are most in need of assistance or when the services will be most helpful. First-year college students are notorious for not realizing they are in need of assistance until well after the fact.

Academic advisors need to think about strategies that will encourage assimilation of the skills and information needed for academic success. They need to think about how best to transmit the academic information and personal guidance needed by students for effective course selection and satisfactory progress toward a degree. Other student services, working closely as a coordinated team with academic advising professionals, should have similar priorities in delivering their service specialties. Effective transmission of academic information and other learning support services to entering students requires concentrated efforts to bring information and support to students where they live, where they congregate, and at the times when support will be the most effective.

*Institutional Realities of Academic Advising*

Before offering strategies for extending advising programs beyond traditional service models, it

is important to examine some institutional and student realities contributing to the difficulty in offering quality advising programs to college students.

*Reality 1. On many campuses relatively small percentages of students receive academic advising from official sources, or, if they do, they supplement this advising with information received elsewhere.* Even those students seeking formal help from assigned faculty advisors or academic advising offices will balance this "official" advising against information received from their friends, upper-class students, residential living staff, parents, or anyone else whose opinions they value. Entering college students are usually willing to seek advice, but they remain susceptible to other influences and informal sources of advice which can be harmful to their ultimate success.

*Reality 2. Academic advising occurs most often during the short periods of time when students face course scheduling deadlines.* Persons providing academic advice are often overwhelmed with those seeking help. Faced with short deadlines, often caused by procrastination, students are not really interested in in-depth discussions of larger academic concerns, and, as a result, academic advising becomes simply course selection. It is not a time in which faculty or professional advisors are able to assess or discuss problems of individual students related to academic performance, career choice, or personal concerns which may affect their academic success.

*Reality 3. Academic advising is not required on many campuses.* Mechanisms do not readily exist to monitor fully the courses that students select in relation to graduation requirements, major fields of study, or long-term student goals. Major efforts are being made by institutions to simplify course requirements, implement mechanized graduation check lists, and develop self-advising systems to ensure students meet graduation requirements. The resulting "automatic advising," while decreasing the likelihood of advising "mistakes," also reduces opportunities for academic advisors, whether faculty or staff, to have the official or required contacts with students that will allow them to explore serious concerns related to their academic program and progress toward their academic goals. While self-advising is not a new concern on college campuses, telephone and on-line computer registration systems which increase advising efficiency may magnify this problem unless the system builds in adequate controls.

*Reality 4. Campus officials, especially those involved in the formal advising structure, do not easily accept the reality of "informal advising" systems used by students to select courses, instructors, and programs of study.* Although the "official" advising system may be used by relatively small percentages of students, it is often assumed that all students use the system. If students choose not to use the system, they are responsible for the consequences, a reasonable assumption except that the end result for the student with avoidable problems can be serious. The long-term impact can be disastrous if substantial numbers of students become frustrated and leave the institution or are required to study during additional semesters at additional cost. With the advent of telephone and on-line registration systems, and the freedom they offer students to change their schedules instantly and routinely, this reality may become a serious institutional problem if not addressed.

*Reality 5. The students most in need of academic advising and other learning support services are typically the least likely to seek it.* First-year college students are new to the college environment and often reluctant to acknowledge academic difficulty or ask for assistance. The problem may be compounded if their families and friends are similarly unfamiliar with institutional structures and services and unable to advise them about their academic programs. It is common for entering students to struggle with their academic problems until they are either overwhelmed or someone within the institution recognizes a problem and takes measures to help. For some special populations, colleges and universities strive to address this problem with special services targeted to these groups. Unfortunately, the larger campus sometimes assumes that these specially targeted programs meet the needs of all students having difficulty.

**Improving Delivery of Services to Students**

If it can be assumed that several of these academic advising realities are reasonably accurate for many college campuses, it follows that institutions must go beyond traditional academic advising models. All first-year students, but especially those who are most likely to flounder and drop out, are in need of special efforts to increase their academic success. All entering students must not only have access to necessary services, but these services must be delivered at times and places in which they cannot be easily avoided or ignored.

At least two conditions are critical to extending effective academic advising and other support services to entering students. First, close cooperation, coordination, and mutually supportive efforts among professional offices across the campus are essential. Beyond this, there is the need for a commitment to reach beyond traditional student information programs and the physical confines of faculty or staff advising offices to serve student needs. Access to students, especially first-year students, can come through residence halls, fraternity and sorority pledge classes, special student groups (e.g., athletes, specially admitted students) and other student organizations. Regularly scheduled information tables or booths in high student traffic areas, in major academic buildings, in collegiate centers, in residence hall dining areas, or public lounges at peak times can help. Several of these possibilities deserve in-depth treatment.

*Residence-Based Advising Models*

Colleges and universities commit a serious oversight if they underestimate the importance of the residence hall program to the students' total educational experience. Often assigned, inappropriately and unfortunately, to the nonacademic world of college life (Boyer, 1990), residence halls are underestimated and sadly neglected resources for helping entering students on residential campuses. There is clear evidence from the research and literature on student involvement, retention, and graduation rates that residence hall living contributes substantially to the satisfaction and retention of college students (Astin, 1985; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). The opportunity for assisting first-year students where they live is especially great at residential colleges and universities where it is not uncommon for as many as 80 or 90% of all entering students to live on campus. In fact, students living in residence halls are likely to spend as many as 70 hours a week, of the 168 available, actively engaged in the residence hall living environment. If there is truly an institutional commitment to reaching students with academic support services, given the realities of academic advising previously outlined, serious thought must be given to extending advising services, at least at the level of establishing periodic information and referral stations, beyond faculty and academic advising offices to residence and dining hall areas.

The challenge is for institutions to bring residential living programs into the mainstream of their academic service delivery programs. Residence halls, especially those housing significant numbers of first-year students, should be viewed as a direct extension of the academic programs of the institution. Student service offices throughout the institution, without regard to organizational structure, should be expected to work closely with residence hall staff in the delivery of programs and services. Kramer and Spencer (1990) argue for a personalized advising system for first-year students that includes assessing individual needs, assisting in course scheduling, identifying tutorial needs, linking student interests with campus resources, and familiarizing new students with academic departments and faculty. Such a program is an improbable dream without a comprehensive structure that involves either a continuous orientation course or a program that includes a system which links residential living directly with academic advising and learning support services.

The "residential college" model, with faculty members residing with students and offering personal involvement with the academic and personal concerns of their students, serves as the "collegiate ideal" (Ryan, 1992) for residence-based advising systems. Live-in faculty or faculty in residence with a comprehensive commitment to the intellectual and personal

development of residents provide an opportunity for the ideal academic advising system. Unfortunately, this concept, while a part of higher education throughout its history in Britain and the United States, has not proven to be viable for most modern institutions with their disciplined-based academic departments and their own faculty for specialized scholarship and research. However, a number of major universities (Michigan State University, University of Illinois, Miami University of Ohio, Northeast Missouri State University, Northwestern University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, University of Virginia, and University of South Carolina) have established residential colleges that strive to meet the living, learning "ideal" that reaches back through the early days of Harvard and Yale to Oxford and Cambridge in England (Ryan, 1992). Unfortunately, residential colleges, although they are experiencing renewed popularity and respect are, typically, specially designed and targeted programs that are not readily available to mainstream students attending these institutions.

There are, however, some excellent examples of advising programs that have been extended to residential settings. The University of California at Berkeley, in a continuing effort to promote the academic aspect of residential living, has established "Academic Centers" in two of its residence complexes housing 2400 students, and offers "outreach services" in the remaining residence hall units. The outreach services include on-site tutoring services, advising, faculty programs, and courses. The Academic Centers, each managed by a full-time "Academic Project Coordinator," offer tutoring, computer centers, advising, courses, seminars, workshops, and faculty involvement programs. The philosophical basis for these centers is the belief "that if the student's home environment is psychologically supportive, intellectually exciting, and conducive to academic success, first-year students, especially at-risk students, are more likely to be integrated into the larger university environment and to become autonomous learners" (Dustin & Murchison, 1993). Program evaluations suggest a high degree of student enthusiasm for the residentially based programs and services of these centers.

Miami University of Ohio, a moderate size public university, offers another model of residential academic advising for first-year students. Since 1929, Miami has focused its first-year academic advising system on residence halls. At that time, then President Upham, concerned about the number of students living in local rooming houses and leaving the university early in their careers because of what he interpreted as a lack of faculty advice and guidance, determined that all first-year students entering the institution would live in the newly acquired Oxford Female Institute and be supervised by a live-in faculty member who would be responsible for providing academic advice and personal counseling to the residents. This system has continued to the present day with masters-level staff trained to offer advising services to residents from before the first day of the fall term until advising records are transferred to the academic divisions and departments the following spring.

The central responsibilities of the first-year advisor at Miami University of Ohio are to provide personal, academic, career, and social counseling to hall residents, and to assume the responsibilities of a traditional hall director. As the formal academic advisor, the first-year advisor is responsible for continuing the academic orientation program begun in the summer with faculty from the academic divisions, transmitting timely advising and registration information, and discussing any changes in the academic program that the student is considering. In the process, the first-year advisor is expected to monitor academic performance, identify academic or personal problems that may hinder college success, and work directly with the student in the process of obtaining needed academic or other services. The first-year advisor is also responsible for offering and coordinating academic, cultural, and social programming for hall residents and for working with various academic and student service offices across the campus to ensure that individual students receive or are referred to the appropriate support services. Careful records of each student are kept in order to facilitate a strong advising liaison with the academic divisions. Because the first-year advisor is assisted by a

graduate assistant and a student staff, resulting in a staff-student ratio of less than 1 to 20, it is possible to know every student personally. The Miami University first-year retention rate is 92%, which is exceptionally high for a public institution, and the five-year graduation rate is over 80%—both of which are partly attributable to the first-year advisor program. Readers interested in identifying other residential colleges should consult the *North American Directory of Residential Colleges and Living Learning Centers* edited by Terry Smith and Elizabeth Raney (1993).

*Serving Commuting and Off-Campus Students*

First-year students commuting from off campus are likely to have an especially difficult time understanding and taking advantage of the institution's academic advising program. Often they may not know of available services, are reluctant to ask questions or even directions to service locations from strangers, are not used to needing assistance, may perceive a social stigma associated with seeking advice, and simply may not wish to acknowledge they are having difficulty at the time when help is most needed. The student's home or work situation may also contribute to the difficulty of providing successful academic advising services. Commuting students are likely to hold jobs outside the institution and have home responsibilities or other home-related conditions that are not supportive of college success. Above all, their opportunity to gain information and service may be limited. As a result, extending academic advising services at those campuses serving large numbers of commuter and non-traditional students is likely to mean reaching into high student traffic areas—such as student centers, major academic buildings, or even major outdoor thoroughfares —to provide routine academic advising at those times of the year when students are actively seeking information.

Accordingly, several universities, notably in California, have turned to a "takeout" advising support concept in which student peer advisors in conjunction with faculty and/or staff, take advising services to students at selected high traffic areas of campus to increase visibility, respond to routine problems and questions, and provide referral services. In addition to the residence-based academic centers and outreach services previously described, University of California-Berkeley provides portable booths staffed by peer advisors and located at well-traveled sections of campus, to answer routine questions about core curriculum requirements, administrative procedures, deadlines, and related topics. Similarly, the College of Letters and Science at the University of California, Los Angeles uses paid undergraduates approximately 10 hours per week to staff five stations in dormitories and other areas of heavy student traffic. These "ASK" students, serving about 800 students per week, advise other students with regard to institutional requirements and procedures and make referrals to other academic and non-academic campus offices. The heaviest activity occurs the first four weeks of each term and when registration packets for the following semester become available. There are doubtless many other examples of peer-aided support programs targeting commuting students.

When considering the academic advising needs of commuting students, the potential for using computer technology to access critical academic advising information should not be overlooked. Access from off-campus or centralized information centers located in student centers and key academic buildings may be especially helpful to students who are resistant to seeking information or assistance in a timely manner or do not have ready access to traditional advising information and resources during normal office hours. While methods of reaching commuting students should vary depending on specific institutional characteristics and the multiple populations being served, the importance of addressing the unique needs of commuting students should not be neglected or underestimated.

*The Role of Peer Advising*

One overriding problem, however, in delivering advising programs beyond faculty offices and advising centers is the cost of delivering these programs. Except for rare circumstances,

it is perhaps too much to expect, even when the need is obvious, that sufficient institutional funds will be made available to staff decentralized reach-out advising services for entering students using professional advisors or faculty resources. If such programs are to be offered as part of the institution's student advising and retention program, student peers will have to be used to support at least some of the staff resources required for the programs despite the problems associated with high turnover rates and continuous training needs. Reach-out advising programs, offered in strategic locations and delivered or supported by student peers trained and certified to provide referrals and give routine information about registration procedures, institutional rules, and common catalogue information, would go a long way toward providing new students with academic information. It would also recognize the reality that students constantly seek, obtain, and act on information they receive from other students and that informed resources are preferable to uninformed sources.

The value of using students in peer helping relationships to enhance institutional effectiveness has been well established (Astin, 1985), and there are many examples of successful interventions in which students effectively deliver information, programs, and services to other students (Hart, 1992). For example, the College of Arts and Letters at University of California-Davis sends advising outreach teams, consisting of trained students, faculty, and professional staff, to high-traffic areas in residence hall locations close to dining halls from the hours of 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. once a week. Two team members work each evening helping students plan schedules, declare majors, meet graduation requirements, explore career possibilities, or address other concerns. Additionally, student peer advisors present workshops once every two weeks on such topics as "Classroom Culture," "Test Anxiety," and "Finals Preparation," and aid in the tracking and follow-up efforts of professional staff. Unfortunately, sharply reduced funding in California has resulted in the elimination of paid faculty participation in this highly regarded program.

Academic information and advising programs involving the use of students in paraprofessional roles should not be viewed as a replacement for advising services that should be delivered in individual or small group sessions. Rather, peer-assisted or peer-delivered reach-out advising information programs should be viewed as opportunities to increase the visibility, utilization, and effectiveness of academic advising services for students. These types of programs provide entering students with academic information in readily accessible formats and provide both a way to respond to the problem of students failing to seek and obtain valuable academic information at the time that they need it, and a means to expand the amount and the quality of advising services available to entering students. Perhaps the bottom line is that using qualified student peers to deliver appropriate academic information and referral services in readily accessible areas of campus may be the only way to overcome some of the problems that limit traditional academic advising programs.

It should also be noted that colleges and universities willingly use students as clerical workers, desk attendants, maintenance workers, and security guards—jobs that do not require college level training or personal judgment and initiative. Since we purport to prepare students for complex job responsibilities and leadership in society, we should be willing to employ them as peer educators and service providers, paraprofessional activities closely related to the educational purposes of our institutions (Hart & Smith, 1993). The benefits should far outweigh the costs for all concerned.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Colleges and universities continue to struggle with the issue of delivering quality advising programs to entering students. Academic advising services must be extended beyond the confines of faculty and advising offices to areas where entering students live and congregate. Expecting teaching faculty to meet the unique advising needs of entering students, given other expectations and demands on their time, is unrealistic. Colleges and universities wishing to

realistically address the realities of the problems they face in successfully assisting new students with advising services should do the following:

- Build academic advising programs on the recognition of *institutional realities* which limit the effective delivery of academic advising services to students rather than on idealized expectations for college student behavior and professional staff preferences that characterize many institutional academic advising systems today.

- Recognize that expecting new students, or those most in need of assistance, to have the initiative to seek academic advising when they need it is self-defeating. Institutions must make initial contact with students and send outreach teams to places where students live and congregate to offer academic advising information and services.

- Consider establishing academic centers similar to those in place at the University of California-Berkeley in residence areas housing large numbers of first-year students.

- Link academic advising services to residence hall systems, and to first-year experience classes and programs, to the greatest possible extent.

- Use trained student peer resources as a realistic and economical way to support making outreach advising teams available at times and places where they cannot easily be ignored.

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# CHAPTER 10

# Academic Advising Through Learning Communities: Bridging the Academic-Social Divide

Anne Goodsell Love & Vincent Tinto

Delivering academic advising services directly to locations where students live and congregate is one very effective model for enhancing first-year student success. Another equally effective approach is to integrate academic advising into learning communities. This chapter describes how learning communities at three public institutions assist students in bridging the academic-social divide that typically marks the first-year experience. It also discusses the important role that academic advisors can play in designing and implementing such communities, and reports some of the research on the impact of learning communities on student learning and persistence.

## Context

It has long been proposed that integrating students into the social and academic fabric of a college or university is the key to their retention and success (Tinto, 1987, 1993). As has been demonstrated in previous chapters (see Upcraft, Chapter 2), theories of holistic student development look both in and out of the classroom for sources of challenge and support which are essential to increasing development. Student involvement (Astin, 1984) and the quality of students' efforts in their academic endeavors (Pace, 1980) are key concepts in not only understanding student development but also in enhancing it. Although these concepts have dominated the literature and profoundly influenced our thinking about student learning and development, a divide remains: Intellectual development is seen as occurring primarily in classes, while other types of development are seen as occurring primarily out of class. The unintended and unfortunate result is that advising comes to be viewed as something outside the boundaries of classes, and thus associated less with intellectual development than with social or personal development.

At large institutions in particular, advising of first-year students often becomes the responsibility of professionally trained advisors who, because of the large numbers of students, can have only brief contacts with students and even less contact with faculty. At these types of institutions, advising is constantly in danger of becoming a vehicle solely for course selection and

degree certification. The high student-advisor ratio at large institutions and the substantial role that degree certification plays inhibit the potential role that advisors can play in the institution, as described in the NACADA Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising (See Appendix A).

Enter learning communities, deliberately structured clusters of courses that seek to foster communication among students, faculty, advisors, and administrators (Matthews, 1993; Smith, 1991). Three learning communities are the focus of this chapter: the Freshman Interest Group program at the University of Washington, a public university that attracts top students from the state and the nation; the learning communities at La Guardia Community College, a college with a substantial immigrant population; and the learning communities at Temple University, a state-supported university that enrolls many first-generation college students.

*The University of Washington*

The Freshman Interest Group (FIG) program at the University of Washington enrolls groups of approximately 20 students during their first (fall) quarter in a cluster of three courses that are linked by a common theme. (Three courses comprise a full course load.) Course content and process follow traditional guidelines, but students enroll as a group in each of the courses. Although students enroll as a group, they usually are not the only students in the class; indeed, many courses are taught in a large lecture format and may have anywhere from 200 to 700 students in them. Some of the FIGs have the added feature of linking a writing course with one of the two content courses that make up that cluster. Not only does this guarantee that one of the three courses will be composed solely of the FIG students and, therefore, allow close interaction between students and the writing instructor, it also establishes a stronger educational link between classes than might be the case otherwise.

FIG members also participate in a one-credit FIG group meeting facilitated by an upperclass peer advisor. The informal nature of the meetings gives students the opportunity to discuss class matters as well as other practical matters of becoming oriented to the university. Equally important, the FIG meetings provide another chance each week for the small community of peers to help each other negotiate the transition to college.

*La Guardia Community College*

Learning communities take on a variety of forms at La Guardia, but share a common concept: Groups of students take two or more classes together and provide both social and academic support for each other's learning. This, in turn, enhances the classroom experience for all. Professors who teach the linked courses of the learning community are expected to integrate the course content, materials, and, if possible, assignments, so that a broader understanding of each course is possible. Varieties of learning communities at La Guardia include liberal arts clusters, Enterprise pairs, and the New Student House.

Liberal arts clusters are groupings of three or four courses in which professors integrate the content across courses according to a unifying theme. The same students register for each cluster, creating a cohort of 25-35 students. In addition to taking these courses, students also are enrolled in an integrated seminar, a one credit-hour course taught by one of the three professors. The intent of the integrated seminar is to provide a time during the week when the students can examine the content from all the courses across the common theme, providing an intellectually integrative experience.

La Guardia's Enterprise Center offers pairs of courses related to business such as math and computers. Enterprise pairs may be thematically linked, and a cohort of students attends classes together. Some Enterprise pairs are offered with study groups led by advanced students. This allows students to spend more time with assignments and to have additional opportunities to ask questions.

The New Student House was modeled after liberal arts clusters, but is targeted at students who are at remedial levels of studies. New Student House is composed of three courses–reading,

writing, and oral communication–and a cohort of 20-25 students who participate in the same courses. For these students, the Integrated Seminar is led by an academic advisor and consists of academic advising, problem-solving, study skills seminars, and test-taking strategies.

*Temple University*

Learning communities take one of two shapes at Temple University: pairs of classes that consist of a required writing class and a content class, and clusters of three courses linked by a freshman seminar. Unlike the writing-link FIGs at the University of Washington, where only the writing class consists of the FIG students and the content class is much larger, both classes in a learning community pair at Temple are composed only of the learning community students. The small class size in both classes contributes to the development of a peer support group, even though students with a full course load take other classes outside of the learning community. Some learning community clusters at Temple University feature a one-credit freshman seminar that is alternately led by one of the learning community professors and by academic advisors. This serves to enhance the integrative nature of the learning community and to continue orienting students to college life.

**How Learning Communities Allow Students to Bridge the Academic-Social Divide**

One of the most consistent findings of the research on students' perceptions of learning communities is the importance of social interaction among peers in and out of class (Tinto, Goodsell Love, & Russo, 1994). Of special importance at large institutions, learning communities allow students to aid each other with one of the key points of transition—learning their way around the campus and meeting people. As a student at the University of Washington said, "One of the biggest reasons for joining a FIG was to meet people. The way the University is set up it is practically impossible to meet people unless you subdivide it into smaller groups." Students at Temple agreed that meeting people was one of the main reasons for joining a learning community: "It's really easy to get to know people; it makes you a lot more comfortable and a lot more at ease. [In] my other classes that aren't with the learning community . . . you really don't know each other; you don't talk to each other; you just sit there" (Goodsell Love, 1994). Many students also talked about the comfort of not being alone and not getting lost on campus.

Meeting people is important because it leads to the development of academic support networks. Students who are familiar with each other are more likely to approach each other for help. This was explained by a student at La Guardia Community College who said, "In the same class you see the same faces all the time, and you make friends. And you discuss anything whenever you want. . . . If I have a class, like writing, and the next class is different [not a part of the learning community], then I have to make friends in that class, and I can't discuss the things that I want. [In the learning community] it's easier to talk about different ideas or whatever you want" (Tinto & Goodsell Love, 1995). Students at each institution talked about studying with people they had gotten to know in their learning communities. In some cases, these relationships continued even after the learning community had ended.

Students also report that they are more likely to attend and to participate actively in learning community classes, a finding borne out in both qualitative and quantitative analyses. One student at the University of Washington reported that he usually skipped his large lecture class, but usually attended his writing class which was composed of his FIG group, because people would notice if he was missing from that class. Another student said, "Once you go to one class, everyone is there telling you to go to your next." A student at La Guardia said that he was more comfortable participating in class: "It has made it easier for me to do my oral presentations . . . because these people know me and I know them. If it was a different class, you don't know them too well, but this is a cluster, and everybody knows each other. I wasn't nervous at all. So that's how it helps" (Goodsell Love, 1994).

Students in learning communities and in comparison classes at the University of Washington

and La Guardia Community College were surveyed about their perceptions of the college environment. In regard to classes, students in learning communities at both institutions reported significantly higher levels of comfort, friendliness, and openness than students in comparison classes (Tinto, Goodsell Love, & Russo, 1993). Students in learning communities also viewed the campuses as being significantly warmer and friendlier than students in comparison classes. It would appear that the social and academic benefits of being in a learning community extend beyond the classes and beyond the semester in which students participate in a learning community. More information about learning community outcomes such as grades and retention is given later in this chapter.

As simple as it may sound, the social interactions fostered within the structure of the academic environment are an important factor in students' social and academic development. Because students are able to address both social and intellectual concerns at the same time in a learning community, they are not forced to sacrifice one at the expense of the other.

### Academic Advising in Learning Communities

Professional academic advisors can play three key roles in learning communities. They can be instrumental in the development of learning communities–course selection and construction of clusters or pairs–can assist with the recruitment of students into learning communities, and can participate as members of a learning community faculty team.

When it comes to developing learning communities, professional academic advisors are in the best position to know what incoming students need, both in terms of courses and in terms of making the transition to college. This is especially true when learning communities are directed toward remedial education or the needs of undecided students. Academic advisors are familiar with core or general education requirements and how they intersect with major requirements. Therefore, when it is time to identify clusters of courses that students need–and that they will sign up for–advisors, administrators, and faculty need to work together to create the learning communities. Several important factors must be considered when developing learning communities, including (a) the student population (Do many students commute? Do students work long or specialized hours?), (b) the institution's curricular requirements, and (c) what courses first-year student typically take. For example, offering a learning community that pairs geology with composition will not work if advisors do not typically advise non-science majors to take a science course in their first year or if the course is offered in the afternoon when most students work.

Academic advisors play another key role when it comes time to recruit and register students for learning communities. Advisors who have met with faculty members and who have a good sense of what the learning community experience will be like are then well prepared to register students into those communities. Communication of this sort between faculty, advisors, and the administrators responsible for the program benefits both students and the learning community program. This is especially true if the learning community has been designed for a specific population of students. The New Student House at La Guardia Community College, for example, is designed for students who are at remedial levels of writing, oral communication, and reading. Advisors need to be aware of this criteria when registering students. In another example, a math and composition pairing at Temple University was designed for students with math anxiety. The professors prepared a flier to advertise the learning community, but alert advisors were the key to making sure that students who fit that description were enrolled. A final point about registering first-year students for classes applies as much to all classes as it does to learning community classes. Depending on the institution, the academic advisor may be the only person students talk to about classes during orientation. If advisors and professors have been communicating consistently about the content of classes, their format, and the type of student most appropriate for each class, then advisors and students are more likely to make good decisions about course selection.

The third way that academic advisors can play an active and direct role in learning communities is by being a part of the faculty team and meeting with students as a part of the learning community. Again, advisors can use their specialized knowledge of the needs of incoming students as well as their skills as counselors to address student needs for academic assistance. At La Guardia Community College's New Student House, three faculty members and one advisor teach a group of 75 students who are divided into three course sections. The advisor meets weekly with the students in an integrated seminar, and the faculty members and advisor meet weekly to discuss student progress and coordination of materials. The advisor uses the integrated seminar to administer and interpret learning skills tests, teach study skill techniques, and advise students for registration for the following semester. Because he sees the students once a week, he becomes familiar with their interests and abilities, but his weekly meetings with the faculty members give him additional detailed information. When he advises students as to course selection for the following semester, he is able to draw on the accumulated knowledge of the entire faculty team and specify which level of classes each student should be taking next. In a similar model, Temple University's School of Business schedules a freshman seminar in their learning communities; one class session is taught by a professor and the next is taught by advisors. With the advisors, students explore career options, learn about resources at the institution such as tutoring and computer clusters, and register for courses. The consistent, face-to-face interaction between students, professors, and advisors, as mentioned earlier, allows for accurate information to flow in all directions and elevates the efficiency of the advising process.

The Freshman Interest Group model of a learning community uses upperclass peer advisors as the primary agent of socialization to the institution. Professional academic advisors register students for FIGs during orientation but may have no other formal role in the learning community. Faculty, as well, may or may not have a formal role in the community, a factor which is largely up to the individual faculty member and the peer advisor of each FIG. Upperclass peer advisors, however, meet with students in the one-hour weekly FIG meeting, and there they perform many of the roles of academic advisors in less formal ways. They continue to orient new students to the institution by giving tours of the library or museums on campus, and they make referrals to university resources such as the writing center, tutoring center, or career center. Upperclass peer advisors also encourage students to meet with faculty members after classes if they have questions. In some cases, FIG peer advisors assign projects to students, such as outlining their course selections for their first two years, thereby encouraging students to become familiar with university and major requirements.

Depending on their structure, learning communities establish a formal way for advisors–be they professional academic advisors, faculty members, or peer advisors–and students to interact. These kinds of interactions contribute to the integration of students' social and intellectual development and serve to incorporate students into a network of resources. The impact of learning communities points to the importance of the individual attention to students that is made possible through these learning community models.

Not to be overlooked, however, in considering the role of advising and advisors in learning communities, is the variety of informal advising that takes place in learning communities. As students gain familiarity with each other and with the resources of the institution, informal advising, in the form of giving advice and sharing successful strategies for negotiating the campus, emerges from the learning community. As students interact and learn more about the campus, classes, professors, majors, and academic requirements, they begin to share information among themselves. Students see this as one of many benefits of learning communities–they can draw on the experiences of many students as they all make the transition to college. Learning communities that are structured to allow time for these kinds of information exchange support the development of such a network.

As students develop this informal network of peers, institutions need to do what they can to ensure that students are sharing accurate information. Learning community programs that incorporate advising information into their peer advising training or faculty development seminars are taking an important step in opening lines of communication and enhancing the accurate flow of information.

Beyond the role that networks of peers can play in informal advising is the important role that faculty members can play. Although faculty members who teach in learning communities are not usually assigned as advisors to students, students may look to them for advice, especially if they have developed a good rapport with the community. These faculty members are interested in interacting with first-year students and care about their welfare, but they may not be familiar with the realities of first-year students' lives. For instance, students may not be as skilled as faculty think they should be at managing their time. Some faculty may want to address this in their classes while others may want to refer students to campus workshops. Either way, the increased awareness that faculty members can gain through training and interaction with advisors may translate into a bridging of students' social and intellectual concerns.

Both formal and informal types of advisement promote the goals of learning communities and the goals of the institutions. By making connections with one another, students gain needed social and academic support. By making connections with faculty members, students feel more comfortable participating in classes and are more likely to attend and actively participate in learning activities. By making connections with advisors–professional advisors, faculty advisors, or upperclass peer advisors–students learn about the resources of the institution, have opportunities to gain academic success skills, and become further integrated into the life of the institution.

### Learning Community Outcomes

Ultimately, students and their families, as well as colleges, universities, and the general public are concerned with the outcomes of higher education. Research on learning communities has examined students' involvement, learning, and persistence (Goodsell Love, 1994; MacGregor, 1987; MacGregor, 1991; Matthews, 1993; Tinto, Goodsell Love, & Russo, 1994) and demonstrated that these communities have positive effects on each of these aspects of student life. While learning communities benefit all students, they are particularly important for first-year students who are often most at risk for attrition. This section presents some of the data on the effects of learning communities.

Beyond the results reported earlier in this chapter about students' increased social and academic involvement (increased participation in classes and more positive perceptions of the college environment), students in learning communities tend to participate more in specific types of educational activities, including writing activities, interactions with faculty members, and participating or attending cultural arts events on campus (Tinto & Goodsell, 1993; Tinto & Goodsell Love, 1995). There also is evidence that students in learning communities come to understand learning differently than do students in discrete classes that are not linked in any way. This is especially true for the types of learning communities that cluster more than two courses together and that are taught in an interdisciplinary or team fashion (MacGregor, 1987; MacGregor, 1991; Tinto, Goodsell Love, & Russo, 1993). Students report that the sustained conversations on a topic, which are made possible because of the continuous structure of courses in these kinds of communities, are essential to understanding that topic from multiple perspectives. In addition, as students get to know one another and become integrated into the classroom socially, they are more likely, even eager, to contribute to discussions by sharing how their personal experiences relate to the topic at hand. Even students in learning communities that are not thematically linked talk of a kind of learning that is less about memorization of facts and more about integration of ideas.

Finally, students in learning communities received higher grades and were retained at comparable or higher levels than students in

comparison courses. At the University of Washington, FIG students' average GPA for their first year was 3.14, and they persisted at a rate of 99.2%. Non-FIG comparison students' average GPA was 2.98, and they persisted at a rate of 95.8% (Tinto & Goodsell, 1993). Although the grades and rates of persistence for both groups are quite high, FIG students performed significantly better. This remained true even after accounting for a possible selection bias in FIG membership.

At La Guardia Community College, students in two types of learning communities received higher first-year GPAs than students in comparison classes. Students in the New Student House averaged a 2.78 GPA, and students in Enterprise pairs averaged a 2.89 GPA, while students in the comparison classes averaged a 2.70 GPA (Tinto & Goodsell Love, 1995). Though these differences were not statistically significant, students in these learning communities came into college with self-reported high school grades that were lower than those of comparison students. Given that information, the fact that learning community students do as well as, if not better than, comparison class students is a significant finding that is understated by looking at grades alone. Rates of persistence into the second year at La Guardia were similar for learning community and comparison groups; however, when students' intent to transfer is included into the analysis, the picture changes. "College continuation" was a variable created by combining persistence at La Guardia with students' intent to transfer (which students are likely to do after only one year at a community college). The rate of college continuation for students in comparison classes was 77.9%; the rate for learning community students overall was 88.5%. Students in liberal arts clusters averaged 87.5%, students in Enterprise pairs averaged 91.8%, and students in the New Student House averaged 84% (Tinto & Goodsell Love, 1995).

Because learning communities at Temple University were implemented beginning in the fall of 1993, the data on grades and persistence are more limited (Goodsell Love, 1994). After one semester, however, students in learning communities at Temple were following the trend established at the other institutions. Students' grades in their learning community courses were higher, on average, than students' grades in sections of those courses not taught as a part of a learning community. Overall first-year GPAs, however, did not differ significantly between groups. Students in learning communities persisted from their first semester into the next at a rate of 95%, while the rate of persistence for comparison students was 87.6%.

## Conclusion

Learning communities are a way for different groups on campus—students, advisors, faculty, and administrators—to engage in sustained communication with one another about matters of educational importance. Each group has information about themselves that the others need to know in order to serve students better, and learning communities can be one way to open the lines of communication. As anyone who has tried to choose courses for learning communities will attest, to do so without getting input on student course selection patterns from advisors and without knowing the training needs of professors is to court disaster. Consistent communication between students, faculty, advisors, and administrators can serve to avoid misunderstandings and mistakes and enhance the quality of the learning community experience for all.

Learning communities can be of benefit to groups of students beyond the targeted population(s). By bringing together students, faculty, advisors, and administrators, learning communities become a vehicle through which other issues about student learning on campus may be addressed. As issues such as course selection and sequencing, or placement-testing practices are discussed for first-year students in learning communities, salient issues for all first-year students emerge. These kinds of conversations may be especially important for administrators who are in policy-making positions but may not regularly hear about day-to-day concerns. The more they learn about the needs of students in learning communities, the better prepared they are to make informed policy decisions.

In addition to sharing information for the benefit of first-year students, increased communication between advisors and faculty via learning communities also serves as a form of professional development. After consultation with advisors, faculty members who may have felt unprepared to deal with the many non-class related problems students bring to class are able to make more informed referrals. And academic advisors who complain that their specialized knowledge is not utilized fully by others at the institution may feel some sense of accomplishment from working together with faculty on a program for students.

Learning communities serve not only to bridge the academic-social divide of students' experience, but enable that to occur for faculty and staff as well. By working together on a common project that focuses on the issues of beginning students, communication between students, faculty, advisors, and administrators is enhanced, which in turn leads to increased understanding and cooperation. The learning community model breaks down structures which previously limited the amount and type of interaction between and within groups. As a result, learning communities can create an enriched educational experience for all.

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# PART 3

# ADVISING DIVERSE FIRST-YEAR STUDENT POPULATIONS

# CHAPTER 11

# Advising Undecided First-Year Students

Virginia Gordon

Many students entering college for the first time are overwhelmed with the prospect of making the "right" educational and career decisions. Some first-year students consider these initial choices as "permanent" life decisions. For this reason, many entering students feel pressured to make a choice of major that leads directly to an occupation. While academic and career counselors know this is an unrealistic perspective, the pressures to make early choices, exerted by parents, peers, society, and sometimes institutions, often prevail.

Other students, however, are openly undecided about educational and occupational direction. It is estimated that from 20% to over 50% of students entering college are undecided about an academic major or career choice (Astin, 1977; Crites, 1969; Gordon, 1995). Undecided college students have been a curiosity and a challenge for academic advisors, psychologists, and career counselors for many years. The amount of research performed on these students over the past 70 years confirms the great interest in them. Although as a group undecided students represent a broad spectrum of types and characteristics, this chapter will concentrate on those students who enter college undecided or who become undecided during the course of their first year.

### Who Are Undecided First-Year Students?

There has been much speculation on why some students enter college undecided about a major and occupation while others do not. Institutional admissions policies and procedures have an enormous impact on how these students identify themselves on a particular campus. Many institutions allow entering students to specify on an admissions form if they are undecided about an academic program. Others do not recognize "undecidedness" as a condition of enrollment. An increasing number of institutions have created special advising programs to assist students through the exploration process during their first year in college (Habley, 1994). Others have little or no specific services to help them make decisions once they have matriculated.

These variations in initial recognition of entering students are manifested in the types of academic and career counseling services provided.

This, along with the differing "attitudes" toward undecidedness among administrators and faculty, influences how comfortable students are in declaring themselves "undecided." While research shows there are common characteristics that the majority of undecided students exhibit, each institution's profile of undecided first-year students will be unique because of differing institutional attitudes and approaches. When students are permitted to declare their undecidedness, they expect, along with their families, to receive professional help in making important academic major and occupational decisions.

*Research Profile*

While recent research on undecided first-year students has focused on psychological constructs, the profile it portrays is not very different from the past. Since most research is performed using psychological variables, the concentration of studies on personality characteristics and decision making is understandable. The concept of undecidedness versus indecisiveness, first suggested in the early 1950s, is still being explored. *Undecided* entering students may be viewed as having normal, healthy developmental concerns about making educational and career decisions. Many first-year students are vocationally immature and lack a readiness for the developmental tasks necessary to make these choices. These undecided students need educational and occupational information and assistance through the decision-making process and represent the majority of first-year students who are engaged in making academic and career commitments.

*Indecisive* students, however, are those who, as a result of unsatisfactory habits or thinking that permeate their entire lives, cannot make a decision about anything. Until these personal problems or uncertainties can be resolved, a career or educational decision (along with many others) cannot be reached. Although this is a small population, indecisive students need to be recognized as "different." The help they require is usually beyond most advisors' scope of expertise. Referring them to the counseling services on campus for professional assistance is appropriate.

A few of the variables that have been studied in relationship to undecided students include identity concerns, anxiety, self-efficacy, fear of commitment, career salience, sex-role orientation, and family influences. Building on past studies, some recent research has attempted to identify subtypes (Fuqua, Blum, & Hartman, 1988; Lucas & Epperson, 1990; Van Matre & Cooper, 1984). Many of these studies use psychological variables such as identity, anxiety, locus of control, and self-esteem. Lucas and Epperson (1990), for example, found five types of undecided students ranging from those who were well adjusted and happily integrating their plans and priorities, to those who needed help with problem-solving skills and developing a life-style.

Since a review of the extensive literature is not within the purview of this chapter, the reader is referred to other sources for this information (Crites, 1969; Gordon, 1995; Lewallen, 1994; Osipow, 1983). Knowledge of the antecedents of indecision as well as some of the characteristics common to the undecided student can sensitize advisors to the needs of their advisees and help them tailor their approaches to each individual's unique set of personal qualities and concerns.

*Developmental Influences*

As mentioned earlier, many undecided students are simply not "ready" to make academic or career decisions when they enter college (Super, 1957). Gordon (1981, 1995) espouses a developmental approach in advising undecided first-year students. (See Chapter 6 for a more general developmental advising perspective.) Many first-year students are in the "exploration" stage of their development and may experience a vague anxiety about the future (Tiedeman & O'Hara, 1963). Some students can identify several alternatives but are not certain how to proceed with their exploration. It is important that advisors recognize students' need for information and encourage them to seek firsthand experiences in some of the fields in which they have an interest. Experiential areas might include academic courses, extracurricular activities, part-time work, volunteer experiences, and other "hands-on" activities.

As pointed out in Chapter 2, Chickering and Reisser (1993) suggest several developmental tasks unique to first-year students including developing physical, social, and intellectual competence, and becoming more emotionally independent. Developing an identity on which to base a career purpose comes later in the college experience for many students. Developing purpose involves assessing interests and options, making a vocational commitment, and setting goals. The critical task of identifying and clarifying work values must be encouraged during the exploration process. The ultimate goal is to develop a clear sense of self in a vocational context. Students who enter college undecided about an educational or career direction have a long and challenging journey ahead of them.

Perry (1970) describes many first-year students as dualistic, unable to synthesize cognitively the information needed to make informed educational and occupational choices. Some first-year students want simplistic answers and look upon their advisors as authorities with many of these answers. Although advisors can challenge students' assumptions about themselves and their purpose for being in college, they can also provide the critical support needed during the exploration process. The ideas and concepts put forth by these theorists help explain why some students are not able or ready to make academic and occupational decisions when they enter college.

Advising and counseling services offered to undecided first-year students, therefore, must take into account the many levels of vocational maturity and personal development that are represented in this population. These students (like all first-year students) are in a period of transition where many life decisions, personal as well as educational, are being considered. They are being bombarded by new experiences. They are sorting through their attitudes and beliefs. Advisors who ignore these transitional feelings will sometimes miss important information about the student which can influence the effectiveness of the relationship and the impact of the advising received.

## Advisor Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills

### *Attitudes*

Most faculty advisors, consciously or unconsciously, approach their advisees with a basic philosophical stance. Some believe students are totally responsible for their own actions; thus, advising contacts should always be initiated by the student. Others view themselves as resources and take initiatives when students make contact and personally express a need or concern. Still others view themselves as partners in the exploration process. They are intrusive, contacting their advisees by appointment, mail, or phone on a regular basis. They create with the student a feeling of mutual responsibility for the student's academic and decision-making progress. Many undecided students need advisors with the latter philosophy and attitude, especially during their first year in college. While this personal contact is important, parameters of responsibility need to be set so a dependent relationship does not evolve. Students who are searching for an academic and career direction need the stability and continuity that an empathic, interested, and knowledgeable advisor can provide.

### *Knowledge*

Effective advising for all students encompasses many levels and types of information and expertise, but certain areas need to be emphasized when advising undecided first-year students. During the first part of the first year, some students are overwhelmed with the personal and academic challenges placed before them. Choosing a major might take a back seat to other pressing forces such as adjusting to new living conditions, making friends, building a social life, or learning to live with people from different cultures. The classroom presents another set of challenges. Adjusting to lecture halls, learning to interact with professors, learning how to study effectively, and managing time are all issues which need to be addressed. Interest in choosing a major usually resurfaces when students need to register for classes for the following term, only to be overshadowed after that by more immediate pressures. Many of these concerns are common

among older first-year students as well. Advisors need a broad practical and theoretical knowledge base in order to understand what is happening to first-year students personally, socially, and academically. Knowledge of student and adult development theory is especially useful when advising undecided first-year students.

*Curricular knowledge.* Advisors working with undecided first-year students need a generalist's knowledge of every academic program on their campus. Some students have multiple academic interests that span many unrelated areas. A generalist advisor can start where students' initial interests lie and can help them understand the curricular requirements, possible career connections, and other important information about the alternatives they are identifying at this stage.

An informed advisor can suggest certain courses that will allow exploration of academic disciplines of interest to the student. Some of these might also fulfill general education requirements, while others may be used as electives. Careful scheduling will allow students to keep their options open while exploring a variety of majors. Obviously, there are some prescribed, highly structured curricula that do not allow this flexibility, but a generalist advisor can help students with realistic academic planning.

Community college students in technical programs face a dilemma if they are uncertain about an academic program. These highly structured curricula do not permit undecidedness among first-year students. Students who intend to transfer to four-year programs have much more flexibility. Students who are uncertain will need to make an initial decision with the knowledge that they will probably add time to their degree if they change majors.

*Career knowledge.* Although academic advisors are not experts in career information, it is important for them to acquire a certain level of knowledge in this area. Since many students do not separate academic major and occupational choices, it is imperative for advisors of undecided students to have knowledge of how occupations are grouped into clusters through various classification systems–such as that of the U.S. Department of Labor (1991), or John Holland's (1973, 1985) occupational environments–so they can help students research occupational information in a manageable form. Designing advising materials that cluster majors by occupational interests, abilities, and values, for example, can help students understand that (a) one major can lead to many career alternatives, (b) one occupation can be accessed through many majors, and (c) many occupations can be entered through one major.

While academic advisors are not career counselors, a knowledge of how majors and occupational information can be integrated is often needed when discussing academic alternatives. Firsthand knowledge of career resources on campus is imperative for referral purposes. Career library resources, self-assessment opportunities, and computer-assisted information systems should be familiar to advisors of undecided students.

Advisors of undecided students must constantly challenge themselves to stay current on the type of information students seek. Through reading, conferences, discussion with other advisors and the career experts on their campus, advisors can continually update and expand their information base.

*Skills*

Just as important as information-giving is the way information is presented. This involves communication skills that incorporate a sensitivity to the students' ability to understand and integrate the information given. Undecided students can be overwhelmed with too much information in one dose. The advisor must determine the amount and type of academic and career information a student is ready to assimilate. Registration for courses is often held when advising resources are stretched to the limit. Prescheduling undecided students should be encouraged so more personal, expanded advising contacts can be provided.

*Communication skills.* Communicating with undecided first-year students calls for special techniques. Listening and talking are obvious

advising skills, but the depth of communicating is especially important when responding to an undecided student's affective behavior. As research suggests, many students are anxious and need information presented to them in nonjudgmental ways. An advisor who comes across as empathic and patient will often be able to gain a student's confidence and trust. First-year students are sometimes hesitant about articulating their fears and desires. Advisors need to be sensitive to students' feelings about being uncertain. When advisors accurately reflect or interpret what students are saying, students will be reassured that someone is listening and understanding their concerns.

*Referral skills.* Although referring students to other resources on- and off-campus is an integral part of advising, the skills associated with referring are not often emphasized. Advisors need to develop extensive knowledge about campus resources by visiting particular offices on a regular basis. Advisors need to explain to undecided students *why* they are being referred to a particular resource and what they will find there. Specific tasks or purposes for using the resource should be established. A follow-up advising session to discuss what the student gained from the experience should be set at the time of referral.

It is obviously more productive when a student can be referred to a specific individual. A common technique is to help the student telephone for an appointment time while still in the advisor's office. Advisors should make note of why, where, and when the student is being referred so the record reflects the contact.

### Delivering Services

Advising undecided first-year students calls for delivery systems that take into account the time, personnel, and special handling that these special students require. The ideal situation is when each first-year student is assigned an advisor immediately upon entry. The advisor represents a cadre of people who are specially trained to work with this population. In time, a trusting, compatible relationship is established that is satisfying to both advisee and advisor. While this scenario is important to all entering students, it is especially vital to the adjustment of undecided students. Students should work on a continuous basis with one person who understands their needs. In this way, they do not have to repeat their life history to a different person every time they seek advice. All students want to know that someone cares about them as individuals. Advisors can enjoy the satisfaction of assisting advisees through the decision-making process, observing their progress, and seeing them reach their goals.

### Advising Approaches

There are many ways to provide the type of advising assistance that undecided first-year students need. The most common and perhaps the most effective is the continuous, one-to-one relationship with a specially trained advisor who assists the student until decisions have been made. When large numbers of students need to be served, some advising centers provide group advising or workshops. An especially effective vehicle is the credit course in which self, academic, and occupational exploration can be guided over an extended period of time and the decision-making process can be consciously experienced.

As indicated above, the undecided first-year student is immediately thrust into a decision-making situation. Many entering students are not sure how to approach the choice process and are not even sure of the questions to ask. Many have not thought about *why* they are undecided, even though researchers have been fascinated with this question for years. Crites (1981) outlines a decisional diagnosis technique which takes into account the student's level of vocational maturity. The advisor and student systematically analyze *how* the student makes decisions and any problems associated with this process. The steps the student might follow to make a choice of major are determined, and a plan is designed to accomplish this.

Another aspect of decision making is to determine the student's ability to perform the tasks associated with research: identifying the information needed, sorting through what is

important, and extracting what is relevant. Advisors can provide a great deal of information about majors and possible career implications, but referring students to a wide array of campus resources–computer programs, libraries, etc.–9898 to search for other information is often necessary. For first-year students, especially, too much information given too quickly can be overwhelming. Asking students what type of information they think is important can lead to a discussion about the kind of information required for a decision and about the type of strategies needed to use it once that information is available.

Also important is the students' ability to perform the critical thinking skills needed to analyze and integrate the information they are gathering. This is one of the great challenges of advising undecided first-year students. Helping students see the relationships between seemingly isolated bits of information is an important component of advising. For example, a student expressing interest in two or more very different majors (for example, engineering and English; art and pre-med) might be led into a totally new area of inquiry where elements of both are included. Laff (1994) suggests that in helping undecided students choose a major, some advisors tend to limit discussions to "questions generated by college catalogs." Instead, advisors should be "research directors," helping students to understand how major course work can be combined with work in peripheral disciplines and other resources, thus creating a model for advising that is common to all good research. To do this, Laff (1994) indicates that advisors "should consciously raise questions, identify gaps in the student's knowledge, probe assumptions about majors, help them draw inferences, and challenge their conclusions" (pp. 31-33).

Students who previously made a choice of major when entering college but who are having doubts about their decision are often involved in an unsettling transition. They may have discovered through course work and their experiences that their initial choice was unrealistic, unappealing, or unattainable. They may realize that they need help but are not sure how to access the appropriate advising resources on their campus. These students need the same type of assistance as entering undecided first-year students. The problem is often in identifying them before they progress too far in their initial academic program or become discouraged and drop out (Steele, Kennedy, & Gordon, 1993). This transition from one major to another can be a critical time during the first college year. Provisions for identifying and serving these special students need to be included in any advising program created to advise the undecided population.

Group advising is useful when a body of information is essential for all students and it is impossible to provide the individual advising that is preferred. Advisors can invite their advisees to a group meeting when scheduling information must be provided in a timely manner. Workshops focusing on major selection or self-assessment, for example, can offer students special information and personal attention. Sharing and interacting with other students in a group setting can also be supportive and enlightening.

A credit-bearing course offers a more in-depth opportunity for students to explore many issues involved in the career search process. For undecided first-year students, an academic major component is essential since many of them have no idea what academic options are available, especially at larger institutions. Advisors may teach these courses or act as guest speakers when their expertise is needed. While career development specialists are more likely to be responsible for teaching these courses, they must also be aware of the importance of providing information about academic and occupational relationships.

Which approach or approaches are used to provide the type of assistance undecided first-year students need will depend on how academic advising and career services are offered and organized on a particular campus. The important consideration is that a total effort is mounted so that a unified approach is provided. Even though their needs span the expertise of many people (i.e., academic advisors, career counselors, career librarians), undecided students need to feel that all those assisting them recognize their individuality and uniqueness as they move through the exploration process.

**Summary**

First-year students who enter college without an academic or career commitment must be given the time and freedom to explore in an orderly fashion. This is a critical time to learn how to gather information about their academic strengths and limitations and how they can incorporate these strengths into various major and occupational alternatives. They can experience the thrill of discovery and hone the skills of critical thinking and information management. The first year in college should be the time when students begin to lay the foundation for a lifetime of career choice and maintenance. As they mature, they will realize, with proper guidance and experience, the necessity for taking responsibility for their own continuing exploration and decision making.

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# CHAPTER 12

# Advising Underprepared First-Year Students

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Laura S. Confer

One of the most important challenges facing the field of academic advising is an understanding of the special needs of academically and psychologically underprepared first-year college students. Most mainstream faculty advisors have little or no knowledge of the needs of this population. They tend to perceive the underprepared student as not only underprepared but unsuitable for admittance to college. Rather than focusing on these students' strengths and potential, they focus primarily on their deficiencies and often wonder what students without demonstrated academic competence and motivation are doing on a college campus. Because students ill-prepared for college are being admitted and, from the viewpoint of these writers, will continue to be admitted in significant numbers, what must advisors of first-year underprepared students know and be able to do in order to succeed with this population?

Demographic trends (Hodgkinson, 1985) strongly suggest that increasing numbers of first-year college students will arrive on campus ill-prepared academically and psychologically for the challenges of college life. If these students are to have a reasonable chance of succeeding, they must not only have a campus environment conducive to meeting their special needs, but advisors with the sensitivity and training necessary to accommodate these needs. This chapter is designed to help the advisor understand the extent of the problems associated with underprepared students as well as the characteristics and needs of the population. In addition, the writers offer a look at why intrusive advising is so essential to the success of underprepared first-year college students and describe seven specific strategies to assist the advisor in being more effective. The chapter concludes with a description of intrusive advising programs at two distinctively different institutions.

If advisors are to work effectively with the increasingly diverse college population of the 1990s and beyond, they must gain an understanding of the various student groups enrolling in today's colleges and universities. The Higher Education Act of 1965, which broadened the purposes of higher education, served as the modern impetus for opening the higher

education door to women, minorities, and undereducated White males, many of whom were poorly prepared for the rigors and challenges of education beyond high school. This changing and diverse student population requires that the advisor possess fundamental knowledge of the educational and psychological needs of these students and the skills necessary to address them.

Advisors need to recognize and accept the fact that the vast majority of students underprepared for college can overcome both the academic skill deficiencies and negative attitudes toward themselves and formal learning if the advisor and the institution send a clear message of caring and support. Regardless of their bravado, students who have consistently failed in school have serious doubts about whether they can succeed in college. Advisors, in cooperation with faculty and staff, must refuse to accept these self-defeating attitudes. They must firmly, yet carefully, confront these attitudes and behaviors and skillfully work with the students to help them make choices that lead away from failure and toward success. Their motto may well be, "We can work it out." Statements such as, "I believe in you," and, "I can help you figure out how to make it, if that is what you want," are the kind of statements heard from advisors who understand the academic and psychological needs of students at risk.

### The Extent of the Problem

The problem of underprepared students in the nation's colleges and universities is twofold. First, the influx of underprepared students into higher education has increased significantly in the last three decades. Moore and Carpenter (1985) and Tinto (1987) report that of all entering college students, approximately 30% to 40% are deficient in reading and writing skills and that approximately 25% of all entering students take remedial courses in mathematics, writing, or reading. These and other trends that relate to the underpreparation of entering students are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1.

The second problem is that advisors who work with underprepared students and other at-risk populations often have little firsthand knowledge of these students and therefore do not understand the characteristics, backgrounds, and motivations of the students they advise. Even when advisors come from backgrounds that tend to foster underpreparedness, they are frequently limited by the prejudices and stereotypes reflective of the dominant culture. Accurate knowledge of the needs of first-year underprepared students must generally be acquired through study and careful observation.

Even when advisors acquire firsthand knowledge, a word of caution is in order. Underprepared college students have more in common with the well-prepared student than the literature suggests. In attempting to compare and contrast well-prepared with underprepared students through a review of relevant literature, the reader is constantly left with the perspective that the characteristics associated with underprepared students do not apply to their academically more successful colleagues. It is our view that these characteristics are best viewed as a continuum, and that underprepared students in most cases are not lacking in academic potential but are less developed academically and less academically motivated than their academically competent counterparts. What they need from institutional advisors, faculty, and staff is a developmental perspective, described in greater detail by Frost in Chapter 6.

### Describing Underprepared Students

Educational literature is replete with descriptions of the characteristics of underprepared college students. Some two decades ago, Pritchard and Bloushild (1970) researched the characteristics of low-achieving students and found (a) lack of academic potential, (b) inadequate understanding of the work required for college success, (c) failure to make studying the first priority, (d) interference from psychological problems, (e) failure to assume responsibility for learning and success, (f) poor communication skills, and (g) failure to select a college where they can be successful. Maxwell (1979) describes underprepared students as those "whose skills, knowledge, and academic ability are significantly below those of the 'typical' student in

the college or curriculum in which they are enrolled" (p. 2). Groves and Groves (1981) and Moore and Carpenter (1985) note that it is inaccurate to assume that these students are of lower intelligence or that given the right conditions they cannot achieve success in higher education. Their previous experiences as students, particularly their secondary school experience, has often resulted in low academic self-concept, lack of specific educational goals, and poor academic skills. Gordon (1992) describes this population as underprepared because of poor high school preparation or low socioeconomic background. Spann and McCrimmon (1994) characterizes the academically underprepared student as "one who fails to meet the established entrance criteria for a beginning college level course or entry-level program of choice" (p. 165).

Several writers have focused on the psychological and motivational needs of underprepared students. Walter (1982) as well as Moore and Carpenter (1985) remind us that being underprepared is not related to race or creed, color or gender, nor is it necessarily related to socioeconomic status. In fact, underprepared students are those with academic or psychological weaknesses that make it difficult for them to achieve their educational goals. Spann and McCrimmon (1994) found that low-achieving students tend to avoid what they perceive to be painful or threatening. For example, those students who arrive on campus with low achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics, when given a choice, will often put off taking the needed basic skills courses or try to bypass them. Fear of failure and even fear of success are not uncommon in underprepared learners. Saunders and Ervin (1984) point out that underprepared students frequently experience motivational problems because of a lack of academic success. Kelly (1988) states that unmotivated students may be more interested in "beating the system" than in doing actual work and may believe they should be rewarded for doing "something" whether or not the quality of work is worthy of being rewarded. Thus, many underprepared students would drop a class in which they are having difficulty rather than face the uphill struggle necessary to recover from their poor performance. Continual frustration with lack of success in the classroom often leads to delay, even avoidance of seemingly unpleasant and unrewarding tasks. DeBoer (1983) reports that low-achieving students are more likely than successful students to attribute success to luck, chance, fate, or powerful others rather than to academic ability. Unwillingness to take responsibility for their behavior is typical of this population (Spann & VanDett, 1982).

Other characteristics reported by Saunders and Ervin (1984) include difficulties with educational planning, an unrealistic image of the purpose of school and study, lack of career focus, high levels of anxiety in test situations, and low family values for higher education, particularly among first-generation college students. Other problems may include difficulty in determining how much and under what conditions to study, reluctance to ask for assistance, difficulty in completing academic tasks, and stress associated with academic performance.

Finally, Walter (1982) asks the question, "What are underprepared students underprepared for, and what precisely can be done about it?" He points out that the major inhibitor to possible success is the psychological distance that most faculty maintain between themselves and their students. For underprepared students, this distancing behavior is a significant deterrent to developing the expectations necessary to muster the academic behavior required for success. Walter also found that these students are not ready for the professional jargon found in most college classrooms. In addition, they are ill-equipped for the impersonal attention they receive from many faculty and advisors. They need an advisor who is not only interested in helping them develop realistic short-term academic goals, but one who is interested in their life story, their personal goals, and their long-term aspirations.

### Intrusive Advising

Because underprepared first-year college students do not often seek academic and personal assistance voluntarily, these authors believe advisors must be intrusive in their approach to helping students navigate the college environment.

The concept of intrusive advising was pioneered by Robert Glennen and his associates in the seventies (Glennen, 1975), and further refined in subsequent writings (Glennen, 1983; Glennen & Baxley, 1985; Glennen, 1991). According to Glennen, in intrusive advising, the institution takes the initiative. Advisors do not wait for students to come forward to ask for help but insist that students make frequent appointments throughout the year to check on their progress, identify crisis situations, offer options, make referrals, and motivate students toward academic success.

However, intrusive advising does not ordinarily mean "hand-holding" or parenting. Rather, it does mean active concern with the students' academic preparation and a willingness to assist them in exploring services and programs that can improve their skills and motivate them to complete their degree, certificate, or educational plan. It also means taking an interest in them personally and approaching them with an open and caring attitude. Such a personal and intentional relationship will help reduce the psychological distance between faculty and students that many first-year students experience when they enter institutions of higher education.

Effective advisors of underprepared students must insist upon regular contact with their advisees regardless of whether or not advisees think it is needed. This intervention allows the advisor to head off potential problems before they arise and reduces the need for crisis management more typical of the underprepared student's style. In crisis, underprepared students tend to spend their energies blaming others rather than solving problems (Spann & VanDett, 1982; DeBoer, 1983). In a preventive mode, the advisor can help the student anticipate problems and model problem-solving skills and strategies.

The literature on advising cites frequent examples supportive of the proactive, action-oriented, intrusive approach to advising being advocated here. For example, Glennen and Baxley (1985) describe the philosophy of intrusive advising as one in which students are contacted on a regular basis throughout the year instead of waiting until the normal once- or perhaps twice-a-semester mandatory advising session or until the student is in serious academic trouble. Earl (1988) conceived of intrusive advising as deliberately structuring intervention activities at the first sign of academic difficulty in order to motivate the student to seek assistance. Intrusive advising blends both prescriptive advising and developmental advising (the integration of academic, personal, social, and career goals) in that the advisor is systematic and directive in offering assistance to students while supporting them in identifying developmental needs and accomplishing educational goals. Furthermore, Earl believes that throughout the academic year, and during advising sessions with underprepared first-year students, the advisor should monitor and evaluate the student's performance, recommend specific course placement based on high school performance and college entry testing, and refer students when needed to counseling and learning assistance services. Because there is constant contact with students, advisors have the opportunity to develop rapport, become familiar with students' abilities, discuss their progress, assist in their decisions about majors and careers, and refer them to other programs to meet specific needs. In turn, entering students find a supportive advocate and ally with whom they feel secure in discussing academic and personal concerns.

While some authors (e.g., Earl, 1988) believe that intrusive advising begins with the first sign of academic difficulty, intrusive advising should begin even earlier through an "early alert" intervention activity. In an early alert system, underprepared students are identified even before they arrive on campus through a series of measures such as high school performance indicators, SAT or ACT scores, state-mandated competency tests, and student self-reported data on their academic and personal needs. This information is provided in advance of the student's arrival and allows the advisor to anticipate possible problems students might face before they get into difficulty and to work with students in taking necessary actions to prevent problems from occurring.

Another element of intrusive advising is effective communication. DeBard (1987) suggests that advisors be person-centered rather than

bureaucratic. Underprepared students need to feel that questions about alternative actions will be received empathetically and openly, not processed through a bureaucracy of academic policies and procedures. This approach takes into consideration their short-term options as well as their long-term needs. Making referrals to resources both within and without the institution, as needed, sends a message to entering students that they are important in a system where too often a student is "just a number." DeBard also believes that the need for empathy does not preclude the need for providing information to students to help them explore alternatives and seek constructive action that will allow them to realize more of their potential.

*Specific Strategies for Intrusive Advising*

Following are specific intrusive approaches that will enable advisors to assist underprepared entering students effectively in moving toward academic responsibility.

*Know and evaluate the student's skills and abilities.* First, the advisor must know the student's academic background, goals, and skills. Often this information is provided to the advisor by the institution following assessment of the student upon entry through placement testing, early alert systems, inventories, and other measures. At the initial advising session, the advisor establishes the long-term goals of the student through conversation, effective questioning, and discussion. It is important at this initial stage of the student's college career that the advisor be straightforward and honest about the assessment information provided by the institution, because underprepared students are often unrealistic about the level of their academic skills and abilities. At the same time, the advisor must assure the student that both the advisor and campus support services are available to help them, and the student should not hesitate to seek the assistance of these resources. At this point, the advisor may also discuss the advising process, the student's expectations of the advisor, and the advisor's expectations of the student.

*Assess the factors that inhibit success.* Once advisors have some information about the student's background, skills, and goals, they can more readily recommend avenues for the student to follow regarding major exploration, course selection, remedial work, and personal and academic skill development. Saunders and Ervin (1982) and Grites (1984) state that a realistic assessment of factors inhibiting the students' success—such as anxiety about taking tests, fear of seeking assistance, inability to define problems in concrete terms, deficiencies in basic skills, and stress related to adjustment to the new college environment and to academic performance—can assist advisors and students in determining students' short- and long-range goals. Once these inhibiting factors are determined, advisors can help students develop a plan to access the specific resources and resource persons needed to overcome the identified challenges.

Beatty (1994) describes a "fish-bone" approach that can be used in determining the root cause of an at-risk characteristic rather than relying solely on surface issues and symptoms. He states there are four areas that can be barriers for any student, but particularly for the academically at-risk student: (a) the students themselves (self-esteem, motivation, energy, personal crises); (b) faculty and staff (teacher disinterest, class size, lack of recognition in class); (c) the curriculum (language problems, lack of basic skills, inability to keep up with the work or to pass tests); and (d) family (lack of money for college, lack of value for education, lack of communication, lack of monitoring of truancy, and the need for the student to be a caretaker at home). Beatty argues that the advisor can assist the academically underprepared student by searching for opportunities to enhance the student's self-esteem, by coming to agreement with the advisee on the major causes of "risk" and seeking solutions, and by preparing to deal with the grief students may feel from not being able to attain their first career choice.

*Refer students to appropriate resources.* Referring students to academic and personal resources on campus is an important function of the academic advisor, especially when working with underprepared students. Students who are having difficulty with specific courses can be referred to the institution's tutoring program,

writing and math centers, and learning and study skills classes and workshops. Students who are having difficulty with making a decision about a career can be referred to the institution's career development center, resources that offer computer-assisted information about various careers, and life and career planning courses and workshops. Students with self-management concerns can take advantage of services that include time-management and stress-management strategies as well as strategies for setting goals and priorities. Students with personal or family problems, addictions, or psychological issues can be referred to the institution's counseling services. Because the underprepared student needs structure and often is reluctant to take advantage of available services, the intrusive advisor must go a step further in assisting students. As Walter (1982) indicates, the advisor should (a) call the program offering the services (with the student's permission and in the student's presence), (b) make the appointment, (c) give the student the name of the person with whom the appointment has been made, (d) ask the student to report on the results of the referral, and (e) follow up on any actions necessary as a result of the referral.

Some institutions admit underprepared students on the condition that they participate in specific learning support programs. If this is the case, the advisor does not have to persuade the student to participate, but the intrusive advisor can monitor the student's progress in such a program.

*Recommend and select appropriate courses.* In addition to knowing the characteristics and nature of the underprepared student, advisors must also know and understand the academic policies and procedures of the institution, as well as curriculum requirements, from which they may gain such information to pass on to the student. The college catalog, advising manuals, and student handbooks provide the advisor with the information needed to assist the student with course selection.

Saunders and Ervin (1984) wrote that when recommending courses to underprepared students, advisors need to assure that students have a balanced schedule, one that both capitalizes on their strengths and reduces their deficiencies. A student who has poor writing skills, for example, should be advised against taking several courses that demand essays and terms papers in the same semester. Likewise, a student with poor computational skills should be warned about taking courses that require these skills until such skills have been obtained through prerequisite course work. Saunders and Ervin (1984) suggest that advisors help students develop a one- to two-year academic plan during the first term of enrollment and that it be structured to balance difficult and less demanding courses. Such an exercise can demonstrate to students that they can make reasonable progress toward meeting program requirements in spite of having to enroll in prerequisite remedial courses.

In addition, it is important that a student's learning style is matched as closely as possible with the professor's teaching style so that there is an optimal climate in which successful learning can take place. While most campuses do not engage in the formal assessment of faculty and student teaching and learning styles, course syllabi are available generally for students to review so that they can identify the particular activities and methods used to deliver the content of a course as well as its requirements and expectations. For example, one class might be entirely lecture-based with all essay questions on the exam. This approach would insure failure for a student who learns visually and has difficulty writing on an abstract level. Another section of the same course, however, might include learning through class discussions, projects that apply the learning to real world situations, and exams that assess student learning by means other than memorization of isolated facts and information from a lecture or a textbook. The underground network among students, faculty, and advisors has frequently identified not only specific professors' teaching styles and expectations but also those who are student-centered, are helpful and interested in student learning, and are available to students outside the classroom. While some persons may think that students want only "easy" and less demanding teachers, most students want to be challenged and to learn in a way that is compatible with

their learning style. Without disparaging or criticizing anyone, advisors can gently recommend those teachers they think would be most helpful to the underprepared students with whom they work.

*Navigate the academic bureaucracy.* Because many underprepared students are first-generation college students, they are unfamiliar with academic terminology, academic policies and procedures, and academic expectations. They often feel overwhelmed, even intimidated, with the academic bureaucracies they face in the college setting. Indeed, they are entering a foreign country where the language is often unfamiliar, the expectations unknown, the geography and terrain unnavigable, and institutional methods and procedures perplexing. For example, understanding how to repeat a failed course or knowing how their academic standing is determined and what the minimum criteria are for remaining in school may be incomprehensible to underprepared students and, therefore, overlooked in managing their own academic affairs. As Boylan (1980) states, underprepared first-year students enter higher educational institutions with information and operational skills deficits that place them at a disadvantage when dealing with complex academic systems. As a result, they have more difficulty than the traditional student in learning to navigate the academic bureaucracy and to manage their academic "business."

Academic advisors are in a strategic position to assist these students with what Boylan (1980) calls "academic intervention" activities. Boylan describes three categories of activities that identify various phases of the academic intervention process: (a) introducing students to the rules, regulations, and services of the institution as well as providing a clear explanation of the academic management tasks that are expected of them; (b) monitoring the progress of students to determine how well they are using the information provided—that is, keeping track of how they are registered, checking their performance, and assuring that they are making progress toward completing the requirements for a certificate, program, or degree; and (c) intervening appropriately on the basis of the information collected. Boylan (1980) states that the third phase of the process can be distinguished from traditional advising activities because it includes not just knowing what the student's academic status is, but actually intervening in order to improve the student's position. The role of the advisor of underprepared first-year students, then, is to go beyond traditional advising and actually "intervene in the management of the students' academic affairs [with the goal of] both solving an immediate problem and teaching students how to avoid problems in the future" (Boylan, 1980, p. 10). Examples of academic intervention strategies include (a) advising students that they have the option to withdraw from courses and what the withdrawal deadlines are, (b) monitoring students' schedules to assure that they are following appropriate steps for repeating failed courses, (c) requiring that schedule changes or changes in grading status from a graded course to a pass/fail option are appropriate or approved, (d) periodically auditing students' transcripts to ensure that courses and grades are correctly recorded, (e) checking for the satisfactory completion of prerequisite courses, (f) informing students of important deadlines for applying for financial aid, changing schedules, obtaining on-campus housing, dropping courses without penalty and paying their bills.

*Monitor students' academic progress.* Frequent monitoring of student progress is a key element in the intrusive advising model. Saunders and Ervin (1984) suggest using a monitoring system that provides timely reports to advisors regarding students' completion of course assignments, class attendance, participation in tutorial services, progress reports on grades in tests and quizzes, and overall assessment of the student's efforts by the instructor. Such a monitoring system enables the advisor to confront student behaviors quickly that could lead to academic failure. Grites (1982) as well as Saunders and Ervin (1984) advocate the use of contracts as an effective method for monitoring student progress. Contracts are negotiated between student and advisor and specify activities (such as participating in tutoring, attending a learning skills workshop, or repeating a failed course), a time frame for

completing the activity, and the degree of success expected. Such contracts provide a structure often needed by underprepared first-year students to motivate them to take responsibility for improving their academic performance.

Close contact with underprepared students and monitoring of their progress can alert the advisor to what Gordon (1992) describes as counterproductive behavior on the part of the student: making up credit lost in a failed course by scheduling an overload of courses, using the course withdrawal option frequently to avoid failure, taking only courses they feel comfortable with, and avoiding requirements they perceive as too difficult.

*Develop an effective relationship leading to student independence.* Communicating effectively with underprepared entering students begins with knowing their general characteristics and their special needs. Being sensitive to these unique characteristics and special needs and approaching them with an open and caring attitude helps to build a mutually satisfying relationship which will enable the students to grow toward academic independence and responsibility. Grites (1982) recommends that advisors concentrate on developing the interpersonal skills of nonverbal communication, listening, and responding to build rapport and confidence. He states that advisors' use of self-disclosure about their own problems and weaknesses, as well as examples of other faculty and students who might have experienced problems similar to the advisee's, can be effective in developing a trusting relationship and can motivate underprepared students to make further progress toward their goals.

*Intrusive Advising Programs*

*The College of Staten Island.* The College of Staten Island in New York developed a model of intensive advising which includes specific services and activities for advisors who work with underprepared first-year students (Aston, Nunez-Wormack, & Smodlaka, 1989). The program includes (a) close and frequent advisor contact throughout the student's first-year, (b) advisor initiation and maintenance of contact with the students assigned to them in order to break through self-defeating attitudes and to find ways to get students to see advisors, (c) individual meetings with advisors three to five times per semester, and (d) notations by the advisor about the academic history and personal background of the student as well as notes regarding each individual advising session. The content of the advising sessions includes three broad areas of concern: (a) academic circumstances, involving such matters as basic skills preparation, attitude toward college, and study habits and skills—usually addressed at the beginning of the semester; (b) future goals, both academic and career—usually addressed during the middle of the semester; and (c) academic programs—addressed at the end of the semester. Aston, Nunez-Wormack, and Smodlaka (1989) found that many of the factors that contribute to the attrition of underprepared students can be alleviated through interaction with a helpful advisor and through active participation of students in the advising and referral processes.

*Appalachian State University.* The Learning Assistance Program at Appalachian State University serves several special populations of students, including underprepared first-year students, and employs intrusive advising strategies. Students are identified before they arrive on campus through a special admissions process and are admitted on the condition that they participate in the special program. Their skills and preparation are assessed through an evaluation of their high school transcripts, admissions scores, and placement tests. They are provided a comprehensive array of services which (in addition to advising) include orientation, tutoring, and learning skills classes; an interdisciplinary course in reading, writing, listening, and speaking to reduce skill deficiencies in these areas; and other developmental courses to build skills in writing and mathematics. They are assigned an advisor who works with them throughout their college career. Intrusive advising strategies include (a) initial contact before they arrive on campus to begin building the connection to the university; (b) orientation, advising, and registration services led by their assigned advisor; (c) a meeting with the advisor during the first

six weeks of the first semester to monitor adjustment to the new environment, answer questions and solve problems, make referrals, and monitor progress; (d) mid-term progress reports of class attendance and the instructor's assessment of the student's progress and effort; (e) mandatory advising for planning the student's schedule for the following semester; and (f) numerous other contacts to assist the student in negotiating the new academic environment.

The staff of the Learning Assistance Program works as a team to bring the resources of the university to the attention of the student and to act intentionally and intrusively in guiding the student through the first year. As students learn their way around the institution and build the necessary academic skills that were deficient, they become more confident and independent, monitor their own progress, and achieve academic success. The 1993-94 Annual Report to the Chancellor states that 90% of the underprepared students who entered the institution in Fall 1992 returned for their second year, and 77% of all students in the program were retained from 1992 to 1993 (Wallace, 1994). Since all students in the program enter with academic and motivational deficiencies, intrusive advising and comprehensive support services are vital to helping these students gain the skills and motivations needed to be successful and complete college.

## Summary and Conclusions

Underprepared first-year college students make up a significant proportion (25%) of students in American higher education. Given the demographic shifts taking place in this country, the number of students ill-prepared for college is likely to increase. Competent, student-centered, developmentally aware, intrusive advisors are needed by all students but most especially for this population of students who lack confidence about their ability to succeed academically or who, through social promotion and an undemanding high school curriculum, are simply underprepared, unrealistic, and naive about the demands of college. Because of their lack of success at the secondary level, students, perhaps for the first time, will sit across the table from an advisor who is caring, nonjudgmental, knowledgeable and realistic about what is required for success in that first year of college. Perhaps they will meet an advisor who will help them find ways to get involved with their peers, faculty, and extra-class life and who will understands that responsible campus involvement is the primary key to success and motivation (Astin, 1985; Glasser, 1984). This is the kind of advisor every student wants and deserves. This is the kind of advisor so essential to the needs of first-year, academically underprepared students.

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# CHAPTER 13

# Advising and Orientation Programs for Entering Adult Students

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Adult students form a large, but diverse, undergraduate student population whose needs are distinct from those of traditional-age students. Furthermore, adults entering college for the first time bring expectations that differ from those of adults who are returning to college after an absence. Advising and orientation programs that best serve adult students are voluntary, academic in focus, tailored to their developmental needs, and scheduled in times, places, and ways that recognize the conflicting demands on the time of adult students.

The size of the adult population in higher education has grown dramatically and is now 44% of the total, undergraduate student population (Kasworm & Blowers, 1994). Adult learners generally are defined as undergraduates who are 25 years old or older who are either entering college for the first time or returning to college after an absence (Greenfeig & Goldberg, 1984). Adult learners bring life circumstance, expectations, and needs to their college experience that often differ from those of younger students (Kuh & Sturgis, 1980). The distinct characteristics and diverse nature of adult students have significant implications for the ways in which academic advising and orientation services should be delivered to enhance academic success.

Despite the growing presence of adult students on college campuses, little literature is available about academic advising and the adult learner. Even less has been written about orientation programs for this population. This chapter discusses advising and orientation programs for adult students, summarizes the characteristics of this population, presents adult development theories and their applications in advising and orientation programs, provides examples of some existing programs, and presents recommendations for practice.

### Characteristics of the Adult Population

The image of the adult student as a returning woman dealing with divorce or the "empty nest syndrome" no longer captures the diversity of this population in the 1990s. Adult students frequently are enrolled part-time, have family responsibilities, are employed, and commute to

campus (Kasworm, 1990). When compared to her predecessor in the 1970s, the adult woman undergraduate in the 1990s is likely to be younger, from a variety of racial and ethnic groups, employed, and unmarried (Chamberlain, 1988). Although men, including retired military men and those seeking a new career, are a growing part of the adult population, very little has been written about the adult, male undergraduate student.

Adults entering college for the first time, as well as those returning to college after an absence, share some common characteristics. For example, both groups of students often enter college at key transition points (Greenfeig & Goldberg, 1984). Both groups are likely to enter college most concerned about their ability to succeed. Members of both groups are likely to enter college with a wealth of life experiences and a variety of family, community, and work responsibilities. These experiences can provide the basis of important transition skills. The role of "student" is likely to be marginal to the identity of the adult student, and their involvement on campus outside of class is generally limited (Breese & O'Toole, 1994), suggesting that well-known retention models that underscore the importance of academic and social integration may not be fully applicable to the adult population (Harrington, 1993). Factors linked to personal circumstances, rather than those associated with the collegiate environment, are more likely to be strongly associated with adult attrition (Harrington, 1993). The accomplishment of developmental tasks in first-year adult students is more a function of other factors such as marital status than of age (Arbuckle, 1994).

Adults entering college for the first time bring different expectations to the academic experience than adults who return to college after an absence. Likewise, those who re-enter after a prolonged absence may differ from those who are returning after only a brief absence. First-time adult students enter the collegiate setting with no prior knowledge about what it takes to succeed academically and no familiarity with basic procedures or the services that are available. New-entry adults are often anxious about their to ability to succeed as students (Kasworm & Blowers, 1994) and may have unrealistic expectations about the college experience (Kuh & Sturgis, 1980), particularly the time commitment required to succeed (Steltenpohl & Shipton, 1986). There are more similarities than differences in the psychosocial development of traditional and nontraditional-age students who have never attended a college or university (Arbuckle, 1994). Re-entry adults, on the other hand, bring attitudes and expectations formed as a result of their previous college experiences that may not have been positive.

### Adult Learners and Academic Services

According to Kasworm (1980), adult students generally report a lower need for most traditional student services, including new student orientation, than younger students. Most adults tend to see themselves as highly self-sufficient and not in need of specialized services. They are most likely to see their classroom teachers as the primary support mechanism for their academic success. Adult students are more likely than younger students to use community resources, particularly for their religious, health, and housing needs. Adults are more likely to value services that combine the elements of personalization, voluntary engagement, and academic community orientation (Kasworm, 1980).

#### *Academic Advising*

Kasworm (1980) found no significant differences between younger and older students' use of academic advising. Younger students, however, report a higher level of need and satisfaction, on the average, for academic advising than do older students. Lower levels of satisfaction with academic advising among adult students may partly be explained by the fact that few adaptations have been made in the delivery of these services to recognize the unique needs of this population (Fielstein, Scoles, & Webb, 1992).

Because the majority of adult students will use, or in some cases are required to use, academic advising in order to complete registration, it provides an important link between the adult student, the classroom teacher, and the wider campus community. The National Academic

Advising Association's Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising (Appendix A) describes the role of the academic advisor in the following way:

> Through regular contact with students advisors gain meaningful insight into students' academic, social, and personal experiences and needs. Advisors use these insights to help students feel a part of the academic community, develop sound academic and career goals, and ultimately be successful learners.

*Orientation Programs*

Older students are much less likely than younger students to report needing, using, or being satisfied with orientation programs (Kasworm, 1980). Some of these differences may be due to the focus in many orientation programs on areas such as residence life, which are of little relevance to the adult learner.

However, orientation activities and academic advising are important sources of information for adult students. Because they bring such a variety of life experiences with them and because they are often negotiating personal life transitions that involve clarification of life and career goals, adults are likely to look to their academic advisor for advice about a broader array of developmental issues than their younger colleagues. It is important that academic advisors and those developing orientation programs for adult students be aware of the characteristics of the adult population, including the variety of developmental issues faced by adult students.

**Adult Development Theory**

Adult development theory is central to discovering and understanding the unique perspectives and motivations adult undergraduates bring to the collegiate environment (Chickering & Havighurst, 1985; Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989). Such theories can alert academic advisors to the variety of circumstances and challenges facing adult students. Although age and stage theory and individual timing and variability theories (Schlossberg, 1984) are also central to the study of adult development, transition theory provides an approach that is particularly helpful in the development of advising and orientation programs for adults.

Adult development theories emphasize the centrality of life events and transitions to adults. Such events shape and give direction to one's life. A critical departure from other theories, the transition theory discounts the importance of chronological age in understanding adult development, focusing instead on the ways in which individuals cope with transitions.

Schlossberg (1984) defines a transition as a perceived event or non-event which results in change (in routine, in relationships, in roles, and/or in assumptions). She identified four types of transitions. *Anticipated transitions* are expected events that have a high likelihood of occurring and can be rehearsed. The impact of anticipated transitions may be reduced since there are often social rituals which accompany the transition. An example of an anticipated transition occurs when a homemaker expects to enter college once her last child is in school. Entering college is an anticipated transition, and planning has probably included integrating the future student role into current roles. For such adults, college entrance will most likely be a positive transition, and they will probably be motivated learners.

A second type of transition is the *unanticipated* transition, characterized by unscheduled and unpredictable events. An adult student who enters college as a result of an *unanticipated transition* (such as loss of a spouse or loss of employment) can be expected to have different attitudes than those with anticipated transitions. Often, such students need assistance in dealing with the transition event, which may be traumatic. Advisors may find that many of these adults need more attention, more assurance that they can succeed, and more affirmation that the potential gain is worth their time and energy. For example, adult learners who have unexpectedly lost their jobs and found themselves unemployable without a college degree may enter the

classroom with a great deal of anger. Faculty may observe this anger as disruptive classroom behavior. If student's motivation for enrolling arises from an unanticipated transition, this information can be used to assist faculty, advisors, and orientation leaders in understanding and responding with sensitivity.

Schlossberg's (1984) model is especially valuable because it identifies two additional types of transitions not addressed by other adult development theories. The first of these she labels *chronic-hassle transitions*, continuous and pervasive transitions which may be the result of a permanent but inharmonious relationship. Examples include a bad marriage, a poor relationship with a supervisor, a personality conflict with a co-worker, or chronic health problems of the individual, parent, or child. The most important thing to know about this type of transition is that it frequently erodes self confidence, leaving the individuals unable to initiate action which might help them escape the situation. Students experiencing chronic hassle transitions typically have a low self-concept; they believe they won't succeed. They have a magnified need for support and encouragement, such as that provided in orientation sessions which include a panel of adult learners at least some of whom have coped successfully with a chronic-hassle transition.

A fourth major transition which Schlossberg (1984) identifies is the *non-event transition*. Adult development theories usually focus on events which are observable, crisis-oriented, and involve a degree of change. They fail to account for the impact of life events which are expected and planned for but which don't occur. Promotions which don't occur and the child who was never born are two examples. George and Siegler (1981) suggest that the non-occurrence of an anticipated event may be more traumatic than if the event had occurred, since there are no social rituals and no social support systems for individuals who experience a non-event transition. Adults whose entry into college is stimulated by a non-event transition may lack enthusiasm. When the motivation for learning stems from an external source (e.g., loss of job) learners will probably be less involved in the classroom and in the college experience. A person who has always intended to be a mother and a homemaker but is unable to have children may enter college with less enthusiasm than the homemaker who experiences an anticipated transition. Such an adult learner will generally need more assistance with career decision making and an orientation program which links her with the campus services that can best assist her in dealing with her disappointment. Additionally, the advisor will need to encourage this student to develop goals which permit a healthy sublimation of her frustrations.

A second component of Schlossberg's (1984) framework describes the variables that influence the ease with which students make their way through transitions. Individuals working with adult learners are encouraged to discuss the timing of the transition (on time or off time socially), the source of control over the transition (Did the individual decide to return to school or were other people or circumstances primarily responsible?), and the duration of the transition (Is the transition temporary, short-term, or permanent?). If the duration is uncertain (as with unemployment or an illness with an uncertain prognosis), dealing with the transition will be especially difficult. The learner's prior experience with the transition is also important. For example, adults enrolling in college for the first time have no prior experience with the academic community. As a result, they will be uninformed about the simple routines of college (i.e., drop/add procedures), whereas the adult learner who re-enters will have previous experience to draw upon. If that initial college experience was negative, advisors may be wise to ask about lessons learned the first time which might help as they re-enter.

A final characteristic to be considered is whether or not the transition involves a role change. Schlossberg suggests that role change transitions are less stressful if there are explicit norms and expectations for the new role. This can be accomplished through orientation programs that explicitly address both the rights and responsibilities of students as well as what is realistic to expect from an advisor. These programs should also provide adult learners with information

about the registration process, what students wear to class, how to get to class, and other details which may create unnecessary anxiety. Assigning seasoned adult learners as peer mentors to new adult learners can also be very effective. Faculty who advise and teach entering adults will find that these learners need specific information about things like what will be expected in written assignments (i.e., how many pages) and how to prepare for tests. These learners will also look for extensive feedback about the work they have submitted. Being aware that new entry adult learners are entering a new role for which there are many unwritten norms and few explicit expectations should make faculty more tolerant of the endless questions raised by adult learners.

Central to an individual's transition is the support they have as they move in, through, and out of transitions. Support includes internal resources (such as the student's coping response) and external resources (financial stability, support from family, close friends, the community, the church, and co-workers). Orientation sessions should include a review of support services which are available to students. Adult learner support groups can provide support to learners who may be enrolling with opposition from family, friends, or employers. Such groups can validate the adult's feelings and also provide suggestions for overcoming feelings of inadequacy.

Finally, Schlossberg (1984) suggests that the transition process involves three distinct periods. Using the example of an entering adult student, the first period of the transition (which usually occurs prior to actual enrollment) finds the learner totally consumed with the transition. The middle phase (which may occur as students actually enter their first class session) is characterized by feelings of being disrupted. Adult students may be doing a great deal of searching for the "correct" in-class behaviors. Additionally, old roles may have changed, requiring negotiations with family members as to who will assume some of the adult student's former responsibilities. Their enrollment also requires that new routines be established. Most adults enter institutions in this second phase, and it is the time during which they are most vulnerable. Providing timely and effective support to these individuals is critical to their retention. They need to feel that the personal and family upheavals they are experiencing will be worth it in the end. The final transition period occurs when individuals have completed the transition—for better or for worse.

Each transition creates problems with unique solutions, and much depends on the learner's assets and liabilities. Some authors suggest that adults seek learning in response to some life change or transition (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980) while others suggest that "adult life circumstances [are] the grounding which cause difficulty in fulfilling the student role, as well as the catalyst to pursue college work" (Kasworm & Blowers, 1994, p. 48). It is almost universally accepted that entering or re-entering the higher education environment involves a transition. The impact of the transition will be dependent in important ways on how successfully the institution's personnel and services recognize and respond to the needs and motivations of adult learners. Individual differences in life stories and circumstances dictate that the process be personalized. For this reason, the advisor plays a key role.

**Advising and Orientation Programs for Adults**

New and returning adult students can benefit from advising and orientation programs which are ongoing throughout the year and are available at times and places that are convenient for this population. Orientation and advising sessions should be both informational and developmental in nature. Some workshops or presentations might be videotaped so that students who cannot attend may have access as well. Printed materials, including pictures, should be targeted to adults. This group wants practical information such as assessment of their current academic skills, directions on where to park when they come to campus, eligibility requirements for financial aid, and procedures for purchasing books by mail. However, they also need to learn about general education requirements and about the variety of programs or majors available to them. Some discussion and reflection on

the transitions they are making should also take place. Adult student panels are often an effective means by which to explore these issues. Career and life planning information is needed as is information about credit for college-level experiences.

Adult students generally look for the same kinds of academic advising skills and knowledge in their advisors as do younger students. They want advisors to be accessible, provide specific and accurate information about the school's programs and policies, and give them good advice and counsel. Since they are generally operating within a tight schedule, they are interested in learning about flexible ways in which they can move toward degree completion, including independent study, credit through examination, and credit for significant life/work experience. They expect advisors to be current in their own fields or to be able to direct them to another resource so they than can explore possible career options. Since some major event or non-event, such as the promotion that never came, has usually propelled them into higher education, the advisor should be prepared to assist them in re-conceptualizing or clarifying life and work goals. An understanding of adult development is useful before entering into this discussion. The advisor should also be prepared to talk with adult students about ways in which learning in different disciplines intersects and how the learning can be applied to their life and work roles. Finally, while adult students do not have as much time to spend on campus as many younger residential students, advisors should share information about co-curricular activities that might help the adult gain or update skills and achieve specific learning objectives. Considerable advising interaction can take place by telephone, as well as by telefax and mail. Some means of electronic access is also a good advising tool for this population.

*Key Elements of Advising and Orientation Programs*

In July and September 1994, two electronic messages were posted on the NACADA Academic Advising Network (ACADV) asking for good examples of advising and orientation programs for adult, undergraduate students. A letter asking for the same information was also sent to members of the NACADA Board of Directors. While a number of schools reported on orientation and special advising programs or services for re-entry students, fewer schools responded with specific programs for first-time adult students. Most of the programs have similar elements—a group orientation for adults followed by workshops and informal group meetings throughout the years. Some of the schools also offer special seminars or courses to assist adults in their transition to college and to encourage academic success. A number of institutions report an Adult Services Office or Center, preenrollment programs, peer mentoring, and a newsletter directed to adult students. Programs for adult students at seven institutions representative of different institutional types are described in this section.

*Illinois State University.* As part of the all-university new student program called "Passages," there are special orientation sessions for adult students, called, "So You're Not 18." Representatives from the Adult Services/Academic Advisement Program answer questions, review services, and distribute copies of *The Nontraditional Student Handbook: A Survival Guide for Adults at ISU.* Workshops and informal, brown-bag get-togethers throughout the year are publicized through a newsletter. Topics for the workshops have included library orientation, study skills, and time management. The Adult Services Office also oversees the peer mentoring program called Major Connections which matches new adult students with other adults majoring in the same field. The Adult Services Program has taken the lead in offering a promotional program with two other area colleges. "Adults Going to College," is a program designed for adults who are considering entering college for the first time or returning to college. Contact: Pat Colter, Coordinator, Office of Adult Services, 4060 Academic Advisement, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61790, Telephone: (309) 438-8695.

*Kent State University.* The Office of Adult Services provides pre-admissions counseling, academic advising, and a special adult orientation held on the Saturday before classes start. During

orientation activities, students may register for classes and receive individual academic advising if they have not already done so earlier in the admissions process. A packet, titled, "Kent State Opens Door for Adults," includes important university information for these students. In addition, the school offers a one-credit class, "The Returning Adult Student," which is designed to meet the needs and concerns adult students have as they enter or re-enter the institution. An adult learner study skills workshop is also offered in late summer and each semester on a Saturday morning. Contact: Lynda Best, Director, Office of Adult Services, Kent State University, P.O. Box 5190, Kent, OH 44242-0001, Telephone: (216) 672-9292.

*Lorain County Community College.* Over the last five years, The Women's Orientation Workshop (WOW) at Lorain County Community College in Ohio has served approximately 350 adult women who are entry or re-entry level students. The free, two-week, forty-hour workshop is advertised by flyer, on local television stations, and in newspapers. Workshop objectives are increased skills, enhanced self-image, improved comfort level with the institution, and increased group sharing and support. Essays written before and after the workshop evaluate how well these objectives are met. Topics covered in the workshop are personal development, study skills review and development, skills assessment, time management, career and life planning assessment, and campus and library tours. Students also hear from other adult women who are currently enrolled at the institution. Participants are tracked for retention purposes, and reunions are scheduled regularly. Contact: Ruth Porter, Coordinator, Office for Special Needs, Lorain County Community College, 1005 N. Abbe Rd., Elyria, OH 44035, Telephone: (216) 366-4058.

*Metropolitan State University.* In 1994, Metropolitan State University in Minnesota, an institution founded to serve adult students, opened its doors for the first time to new first-year students. An orientation course, modeled after the University of South Carolina's University 101, titled Metro 101, is offered in two-hour afternoon or evening time slots. First-time students are assigned to an academic advisor at entrance and are encouraged to attend college program information meetings and file a degree plan by the time they complete 90 credits. All of the university's students are commuters, and a majority of the advising contacts are by telephone or letter. Evening advising hours are scheduled. Contact: Carol Ryan, Metropolitan State University, 700 E. 7th St., St. Paul, MN 55106. Telephone: (612) 772-7689.

*Pacific Lutheran University.* Students 30 years of age or older may apply for the Accelerated Undergraduate Re-entry for Adults (AURA) program at Pacific Lutheran. Approximately 95% of the adult students who choose the program are first-year students. Applicants receive individualized advising and skills assessment and make decisions in conjunction with a staff member about the most appropriate options for them. Those accepted into the program must complete a psychology course during the first year called "Routes to Adult Learning." Objectives of the course are to assist the student in developing a prior learning portfolio; help them review and determine life, career, and educational goals; and help them understand and adjust to the university environment. As part of the class, students also study the nature of adult learning and work to develop study and communications skills. Contact: Patricia Roundy, AURA Program Director, Pacific Lutheran University, 107 Ramstad Hall, Tacoma, WA 98447, Telephone: (800) 274-6758.

*The Pennsylvania State University.* At Penn State, personnel in the Center for Adult Learner Services co-sponsor an annual Adult Student Fair in August designed to attract adults who might be interested in attending the institution on a full- or part-time basis. They also conduct an orientation program each semester for first-time adult students, adult transfer students, and adult graduate students. Practical information, such as how to obtain ID cards, where to park, financial aid options, and registration procedures is provided. A panel of adult learners talks to the new students about their experiences. Resource materials gathered from across the institution are available. The orientation takes place in the Center for Adult Learners so that students will become familiar

with the faculty, other personnel, and services offered in the Center.

At other times of the year, separate programs are offered for adults on such subjects as study skills, computer skills, and coping with multiple roles. Center staff have developed a Handbook for Adult Learners, an advisor/student relationship brochure, and a flyer outlining the process for earning credit for prior college level experience. The group also publishes a newsletter that includes profiles of some of the students. Contact: Charlene Harrison, Director, Center for Adult Services, The Pennsylvania State University, 323 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802. Telephone: (814) 863-3887.

*University of Washington.* In the evening program, adults make up approximately 84% of the total enrollment. All students receive pre-program advising assistance. College personnel meet with prospective students, review past academic records, discuss admission requirements, and estimate program completion requirements in terms of time, money, and courses. After students are admitted, a formal advising appointment is scheduled, and official transfer credits are evaluated. A two-hour, optional orientation program is offered at night. Topics covered include support services, how to use the libraries, services available after 5:00 p.m., and child care. Optional three-hour Saturday seminars are held on subjects such as note taking, test taking, text anxiety, writing research papers, learning styles, and career development.

Students have access to evening and some Saturday advising hours and can communicate with advisors by telephone, telefax, or e-mail. Contact: Bruce Bennett, Evening Degree Program, GLT-21, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195. Telephone: (206) 543-6160.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Tailoring academic advising and orientation programs to meet the needs of adult learners generally requires review and revision of present campus delivery systems. Faculty, professional advisors, student personnel service providers, and administrators should work together to make changes in scheduling in order to provide programs designed specifically for adult students as they enter or re-enter school. Such orientation programs should be offered at times and places where this population can easily participate. Institutions may also want to provide written materials and video presentations designed specifically for adult students which they may check out for use at home. Follow-up sessions are useful throughout the year on topics of particular interest to adults.

Training opportunities for advisors, faculty, and staff who will be working with older students must be planned and incorporated into institutional professional development offerings. If advisors are to meet the developmental and informational needs of entering adult learners, an understanding of adult development and adult transition theory is critical. Armed with this information, advisors will be better equipped to assist adult students as they assess their present positions and make educational and career decisions.

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# CHAPTER 14

# Pluralistic Advising: Facilitating The Development and Achievement of First-Year Students of Color

Thomas Brown & Mario Rivas

Access to higher education continues to be problematic for American-Indian, African-American, Latino, Chicano, Mexican-American, and some Asian-Pacific-American students. Even when they are admitted to college, their attrition rates are higher, and they are far less likely to achieve their educational goals than their White peers. While some Asian-American groups participate and succeed in higher education at levels that exceed the White population, there are ethnic groups within the Asian-Pacific-American population whose achievement and success do not support the myth of Asians as a "model minority."

The attrition of students of color is a personal tragedy for them and their communities which need their skills so desperately. It is also a significant loss of human capital for a nation that can ill afford to lose the vast potential represented by this growing proportion of its population. If these students are to be successful in greater numbers, their experiences in the first year of college are crucial, for, as pointed out many times in this monograph, the first year is critical to student success. This is especially true for students of color on predominantly White campuses who face a double adjustment (Stage & Manning, 1992). In addition to learning to cope independently with a new environment, they must also learn to adapt to new aspects of the dominant culture in other areas of their lives.

While students of color, in general, have specific needs for support in their first year of college, we must not assume that all such students are at risk. We must be constantly vigilant in opposing negative stereotypes that can stigmatize individual students. Too often, faculty, staff, and students have erroneously assumed that *all* students of color are at risk. In this chapter, it is not our intent to suggest that individual students of color are lacking in the skills, attitudes, or behaviors to succeed in college. Tinto (1987) reports that between 30% and 40% of all entering students are to some degree deficient in college level reading and writing skills, and one quarter take remedial courses. Eckland and Henderson (1981) find that, controlling for ability, high-ability Black students persist at a higher rate than White students of similar ability.

Nonetheless, we cannot be blind to the reality that many students of color are not achieving the academic success that they or their institutions desire. This chapter focuses on the issues and challenges faced by many students of color, particularly those whose success in the first year of college is problematic. It begins by identifying the general status of students of color in higher education and highlighting the concept of "diversity within diversity." It continues by addressing conceptual and relational issues that challenge first-year students of color and their advisors, and concludes by setting forth strategies that advisors should use if they are to support these students.

### The Status of Students of Color in Higher Education

Each year the American Council on Education (ACE) produces its *Status Report on Minorities in Higher Education*. The 1993 report found that even as the proportion of Blacks and Latinos in the population increases, they continue to be underrepresented in higher education. For example, in 1992, only 33.8% of African American and 37.1% of Hispanic high school graduates ages 18 to 24 were enrolled in college, compared with 42.2% of Whites (Carter & Wilson, 1994). Only 27.3% of American-Indian students who enter college ever complete their degrees, and more than 50% leave college in the first year (Wells, 1989). Thompson (1990) speculates that many of these students are the first in their families to attend college and there is "no tradition of support, encouragement, or even understanding the pressures of college attendance" (p. 245). Finally, a significant percentage of Asian-Pacific Americans of college age are not enrolled in college, particularly the poor, non-English speaking immigrants (Wang, 1993). Furthermore, if 10 Black and Hispanic students enter elementary school, about 6.5 will graduate from high school. Of these, about 2 will enter college and less than one will graduate (Carter & Wilson, 1994).

#### *Students of Color: Diversity Within Diversity*

All ethnic groups within our country are an aggregation of many distinct subgroups. Despite similarities, there are many ways in which these subgroups are distinct from one another by language, culture, and socioeconomic status. For example, there is a tendency, perpetuated by the media, to view Asians as a monolithic "model minority" that needs no special attention from higher education. However, there is significant diversity among the more than 30 nations in the Asia-Pacific region. The U.S. Census Bureau distinguishes 13 Asian groups, including Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Asian Indian, Korean, Vietnamese, Laotian, Thai, Hmong, Pakistani, Hawaiian, Samoan, and Guamanian. Within these groups, further distinctions are evident. For example, in the Philippines, 111 different languages are spoken.

Likewise, Latinos are not a homogeneous group. There are more than twenty Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries in the Western hemisphere and many Latinos self-identify based on their country of origin. Generally, ethnic identification as "Latino" or "Hispanic" is used in contrast to others who are not Spanish speaking. It is also helpful to distinguish those who are multigenerational from those who are more recent immigrants. An important further distinction is how multigenerational Latinos identify themselves based on their class status and political orientation (e.g., Chicano, Raza, Mexican American).

While the majority of Blacks in this country are descendants of Africans, there are others who trace their roots to the Caribbean islands, while still others are on student visas from the nations of Africa. Within these groups, there are still other distinctions, such as between those Haitians who fled in the 1950s who represented the first waves of wealthier, more westernized immigrants and many of the "boat people" who are fleeing in the 1990s. In still other instances, there are Blacks of Hispanic origin who will identify themselves as Cuban, Puerto Rican, or Belizian rather than as "African American."

There is also great diversity among Native Americans. There are some 545 tribes recognized by the federal government (Klein, 1993), speaking some 250 languages (Native Americans Today, 1994). Many identify themselves as

members of a specific tribal group, and some tribes may not consider members of other tribes to be Indians (Wells, 1989).

### Factors that Impact the Social and Academic Integration of First-Year Students of Color

*Differences Between High School and College*

For students of color, the transition from high school to college either reinforces their strengths or amplifies their weaknesses. Many are first-generation college students who often do not know what college is about or what is required to be successful in an environment where they may be at the margins.

Many of these students leave environments where they have been nurtured, supported, and affirmed by family, teachers, and community to enter one that is less personal, requires greater independence, and in some instances tells them they are not able or expected to succeed.

Further, many students of color come from high schools where few go on to college. Often, the schools they attend lack the resources to prepare students for college. For example, O'Brien (1988) found that many students in urban areas attend high schools where they cannot get the courses they need to be competitive in college. The students who succeed in spite of this reality are accustomed to being among the top achievers. Indeed, some have been the academic "stars" of their schools, persevering through commitment, determination, and hard work. But even these students need continuing advice, guidance, and support if they are to succeed in college because too often competition is magnified and success is no longer something they can take for granted. To such students, a "D" grade on a first examination may arouse increased doubt and eventually lead to withdrawal from college. Unfortunately, for students of color, withdrawal is more likely to be attributed by many to a fundamental lack of ability rather than lack of preparation.

Further, behaviors which may have served students of color well in high school often need to be retooled and sharpened for them to succeed in college. For example, the number of hours required for subject mastery frequently leaves many students wondering why the "two hours of study for every hour of class" formula is not producing the desired results. "How long must I study?" they ask, as they realize that two or three hours of studying per night is insufficient. Unfortunately, shock, shame, feelings of doubt, and a lack of culturally relevant services often inhibit help-seeking behaviors which could ameliorate their problems. Thus, as discussed in earlier chapters, *intrusive* efforts by faculty and advisors must be initiated.

*Minority for the First Time*

Deborah LaCounte (1987) notes that for American-Indian students who attended high schools on reservations that were 98% Indian, enrollment in college is frequently the first long-term exposure they have to a non-Indian environment. Augustine Pounds (1987) is among those who observes that "for some Black students, enrolling in college is the first time they have lived or learned in an integrated environment" (p. 27). Thus, it is not until they enroll in college that many students of color experience what it means to be a "minority" in U.S. society. Many come from communities in which their ethnic group may have been a majority or close to it. Perhaps they attended high schools where there was a critical mass of persons from backgrounds similar to theirs or where there was a variety of different ethnic groups. To be designated a "minority" student on many campuses is assumed to be "underprepared," "at-risk," or even "inferior." On the other hand, to be identified as "Asian" is to find oneself confronting frequently unrealistic expectations of success and stereotypical notions of the fields or careers for which one is best suited.

Claude Steele (1992) writes that terms like "racism" or "prejudice" understate the extent to which some minority groups, particularly Blacks, are devalued in American society. Confronted with a society which proclaims their inadequacy in so many ways, many students of color avoid becoming fully engaged in their academic work as a way of maintaining their sense of self worth (Covington, 1992) or as a

way of avoiding the double bind of confirming their "inferiority" by failing at a task. Many students of color are often *ego* involved (Nicholls, 1984), in that they compare themselves to some idealized vision or norm and conclude that they do not measure up. The challenge for academic advisors is to encourage these students to become *task* involved and assist them to break down the various tasks of college into "do-able" components so they will be able to measure and experience, in concrete, tangible ways, their progress toward goal achievement (Rivas, 1988).

*Identity Development*

Ibrahim (1985) observes that it is important to understand the cultural values and world view of students if we are to respond effectively to cultural diversity. Sue (1981), in turn, notes that the world views of ethnic minorities are shaped by racism and the subordinate position assigned to people of color in society. Many students of color come to college without having had to confront issues of race in their lives. When they encounter prejudice or stereotypical attitudes, their anger and disappointment can contribute to a desire for separation and withdrawal (Fleming, 1984; Stage & Manning, 1992). Advisors cannot work with students of color in a meaningful and effective manner unless they have some understanding of these students' life experiences and the resultant philosophical assumptions that they carry with them (McEwen, Roper, Bryant, & Langa, 1990).

There are a number of ethnic minority identity development models that have been proffered, which explicate the acculturation experiences of students of color and point to some of the developmental tasks these students may face in the first year of college (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1983; Cross, 1971; Ruiz, 1990). These models clarify the impact that being socialized in a hostile environment can have on the identity development of persons of color. These *minority identity development* models point out that there are passages and stages that ethnic minorities undergo in developing a strong sense and acceptance of self and others. Wright (1987) points out that it is important to recognize that most White students do not experience acculturation to the same degree as students of color.

One common stage of ethnic minority identity development models is that students are likely to be less receptive to communication with those outside their own ethnic group for a period of time. This *encounter/immersion* stage of lesser receptivity is generally followed by the transitional *emersion* phase which leads to an *internalization* phase in which the person of color is "self appreciating, group appreciating, and selectively appreciating of others" (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1983). There is considerable research showing that students of color often prefer working with helping professionals who share their ethnicity. Sanchez and Atkinson (1983) find this to be the case for Mexican-American students, while Johnson and Lashley (1989) present similar data for Native-American students. Pomales, Claiborn, and LaFramboise (1986) observe that Black students see a "culturally sensitive" counselor as more competent than a "culture blind" counselor. However, a culturally competent advisor can transcend issues of racial match (Paniagua, 1994) to develop effective relationships with students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. As racial and ethnic interactions continue to be more multilayered and multilateral, developing such competencies is also important for advisors of color who are working with students whose ethnicities differ from their own.

*Attributions: Low Ability and High-Task Difficulty Issues*

Many students of color come to college with doubts about their ability to succeed based on their previous experiences in education. These students are often trapped in the entanglement of negative attributions, feelings, and expectations. Undermining attributions and resulting emotions are clearly related to students not persisting and eventually disengaging from academic tasks. A common self-statement is, "I really don't have what it takes [low ability attrition], and, even if I wanted to [effort], college [task] is too difficult for me to complete successfully [goal expectancy]."

Upcraft, Finney, and Garland (1984) correctly declare that a major issue for first-year students is questioning whether or not they have what it takes to be successful in college. For the reasons highlighted above, this may be even more the case for students of color. Bernard Weiner (1985), in turn, put forth an attribution theory of achievement and emotion that provides insight into what many students of color may experience when they attend college. In short, Weiner's theory says that self-attributions of low ability paired with perceptions of high task-difficulty combine to lower the perceived attainability of a goal. Affectively, perceptions of low ability and high task-difficulty translate to emotions of shame and doubt, and to hopelessness and helplessness, respectively.

Low ability and high task-difficulty attributions are made all the more pernicious by the often low expectations and attributions that faculty and advisors hold (and even express) toward students of color. It is a well established fact in social psychological research (Weiner, 1985) that expectations, either from self or others, often lead to "self-fulfilling prophecies." In this regard, Howard and Hammond (1985) note that "credible expectancies influence performance [which] affects the intensity of effort, level of concentration and the willingness to take reasonable risks—key factors in the development of self-confidence and new skills" (p. 20). Howard and Hammond also write that negative expectations from *credible* sources (faculty, advisors, etc.) have a powerful effect on the academic performance of ethnic minority students.

*Competing Priorities: Work, Family, and School*

We would be remiss if we did not raise the issue of how financial concerns and family responsibilities serve as major barriers to the academic and social integration of students of color. A comparison of family incomes across ethnic groups found that Black, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, Native-American, and some Asian groups are in a socioeconomic status that is significantly lower than the White population (Ramist & Arbeiter, 1985). Financial difficulty is the reason cited most frequently by students for withdrawing from college (Carter & Wilson, 1994). In short, for students of color, it is often difficult, if not impossible, to focus on higher level tasks such as academic achievement when they are concerned about supporting their family or whether or not they can afford to remain in college to complete their educational objectives.

Many Asian and Latino students from traditional families may be expected to work in a family business or contribute to maintenance of the family household while assuming the responsibilities of college. This work may not be limited only to actual labor, but may also include child care, serving as the family translator, keeping the books, representing parents and relatives in a variety of settings, and participating in important cultural events and ceremonies (e.g., American-Indian students may need to take time off from classes to attend sacred ceremonies). During the first year these students often are caught between individual goals and responsibilities to family. The resulting lack of time to study, inability to focus exclusively on academic work, and mixed emotions about whether or not they should be in college are all factors that negatively impact the environment of these students in their first year of college.

## The First College Year: A Dynamic Period for Students of Color

The Vice Chancellor of the Maricopa Community College District (de los Santos, 1989) makes several observations about the relationship between students of color and higher education. He observes that in the 1960s and 1970s, the primary issue in higher education regarding students of color was to increase their access to the colleges and universities from which they had historically been excluded. In the 1970s and 1980s, the focus expanded to include specific programmatic efforts that could increase the retention of students of color. Now, in the 1990s and beyond, the challenge is to identify and implement interventions that will support increased levels of achievement and success. In a related vein, Astin (1984) argues that access to college must be followed by conscious efforts to help students succeed.

Many students of color, like other first-generation college students, believe that simply obtaining a bachelor's degree will allow them to achieve the practical career goals that motivated them to go to college in the first place. These students are frequently unclear about such things as the steps they must take to reach their goals, the skills required, and the time and effort that must be invested. For example, many do not understand the progression from undergraduate to graduate and professional studies that they may need to follow to achieve their goals. Additionally, they often do not see the connection between their long-range goals and prerequisite courses, GPA expectations, and the need for networking in the college community.

While access and retention remain critical challenges, the measuring of success in the first year of college and beyond must be seen as more than just "making it through." Students and their advisors must lay the foundation for the levels of high achievement that are essential to realize the benefits of college that these students, their families, and communities expect and require. Students must be encouraged not to make themselves "*C* sick." A student must be encouraged to rise above "*C*-level, to *B*ecome *A* successful person" (Brown & Rivas, 1991).

The first days and weeks of college are also critical to the eventual integration, persistence, and achievement of students of color. It is at this time that they need to establish positive relationships with peers, faculty, and college programs and solidify work-study habits that are effective for them. In many educational settings, the responsibility of reaching out to entering students of color is left to faculty, staff, and other students of color. There is no question that such interactions produce positive results by reducing social isolation and connecting students to mentors and role models. Unfortunately, there are too few persons of color on most campuses to assume this role, and the demands on their time are considerable. Institutions that are most successful in promoting achievement of students of color are comprehensive in their efforts to welcome, orient, and involve these students with the entire campus community.

At Saint Mary's College of California, the Office of Advising Services/Special Programs sponsors "welcome receptions" each year for entering groups of Asian, Black, and Latino faculty, staff, returning students, and alumni. Representatives from the entire campus community are invited to participate. The president or a dean may offer introductory remarks and words of welcome along with the coordinators of the minority student program offices. Faculty from across the college attend the receptions, as do student body officers, and staff from Student Affairs, Academic Support and Achievement Programs, the Alumni Office, Campus Ministry, the Counseling Center, and Career Development. New and returning students are provided with specific information about services and how they can access these resources. What is the message to students? You are part of a community comprised of people whose ethnicity you share, but you are also part of a larger campus community where there are many people who care about you and who are available to support and assist you. Activities such as these also facilitate important connections to faculty, campus services, and resources that form an integrated system to support student involvement, achievement, and success.

### Skills and Interventions for Effective Pluralistic Advising

An effective series of encounters between a student and a competent, caring, and sensitive advisor must be repeated by other skillful advisors who successfully "recruit" students of color to them and to the institutions they represent. Drawing on the work of Shils (1961), Vincent Tinto (1987) observes that the closer students are to the center of the intellectual and social life in a college or university, the more likely they are to experience a sense of connection and resultant commitment to remain in that institutional environment. When students perceive themselves to be at the margins or periphery (Shils, 1961), the greater is the likelihood that they will experience a sense of disconnection and apartness. In fact, students can intentionally or unintentionally move away from the intellectual center of institutional life *because* they feel isolated and marginalized. While they may feel a

strong sense of attachment to their immediate group (Tinto, 1987), there is not necessarily a commitment to the institution as a whole, and dropout is one result. Affiliations with significant members of the campus community (e.g., faculty, advisors, peers, mentors) can counter the social isolation experienced by students of color.

The following section focuses on several key strategies that an advisor can employ to engage and advise students of color. These strategies emphasize establishing rapport, structuring the advising relationship, and communicating commitment to student success.

*The First Advising Session*

The initial advising session can best be described as multilayered and multifaceted. Related to the earlier discussion of "diversity within diversity," Falicov (1982) argues that broad cultural generalizations often do not do justice to regional, generational, socioeconomic, or other distinctions within specific ethnic groups. Thus, advisors must avoid the tendency to "economize on the energy that is required to make distinctions" (Brown, 1993) and strive to see the *individual* student. Otherwise, the result is generalization and stereotyping. Advisors must approach the first advising session with few preconceived notions about the student. This "non-assumptive" approach should be combined with an expressed commitment and willingness to get to know the individual student. Expressing commitment means that prior to the first session the advisor must collect and review as much background information as is available (e.g., previous academic records, co-curricular and work involvements, etc.).

Colette Fleuridas (personal communication, 1995), Director of the Counseling Leadership Program at Saint Mary's College, asserts that advisors need a balance of updated knowledge about cultural norms, values, and perspectives within broad groups. She urges that those who work with students of color must have information about general and specific differences (e.g., generational issues, tribal associations). At the same time, however, advisors must not allow this background information to cloud their interactions with the individuals who sit in front of them and seek their advice.

When students arrive for advising, what they see, both from the advisor and in the office environment, can have an effect on the establishment of rapport. Inconsequential as it may seem, even the office area can communicate a great deal to students about the advisor. The magazines in the waiting area, the art on office walls, or the books on the shelf tell students something about where they and those like themselves fit in the college and in the world of the advisor. Advisors might do well to survey their environments and determine how welcoming these physical spaces are to the student populations being served.

In the same vein, the advisor's relational style communicates to students much about whether they are valued and welcome. Students should be greeted warmly and genuinely, with an accompanying welcome to the department, program, institution, and the work that the advisor will do with them. Advisors should also develop an awareness of how students from different cultural backgrounds may react to the style of an advisor whose ethnicity and world view differ from their own. Consulting with colleagues who are experienced and effective with specific populations, along with continuing education, can produce increased levels of skill and confidence in this regard.

*Effective Pluralistic Advising Skills*

Paniagua (1994) provides some general guidelines for working effectively in multicultural relationships. For example, he points out that in the first session, Asians from traditional backgrounds may expect a formal relationship wherein concrete and tangible advice is provided, whereas Mexican Americans from traditional backgrounds may look for a more easy-going style (personalismo) in which the order of business of the first session would be to establish a personal relationship. African-American students, in turn, may demonstrate an initial hesitance to self-disclose to the advisor, calling

for a mixture of the formal and personal styles noted above. The key concept is that advisors must monitor their own behavior and recognize that a monocultural approach will not suffice in establishing rapport with diverse student populations.

Beyond understanding the diversity of interpersonal styles that students may expect or prefer in advising, it is important for advisors to reflect on their own beliefs, attitudes, and biases toward various ethnic groups. For example, if an advisor believes that Asians are "naturally" inclined to be mathematically or scientifically competent, or that African American students are inherently disadvantaged "except in sports," or that Latinos and Native Americans lack drive and assertiveness, the advisor risks alienating the students and contributing to perpetuating the unsatisfactory status quo. Kegan (1982) argues that the creation of a link (i.e., the establishment of rapport which leads to engagement) between teacher and student is the "most powerful determinant of future thriving" (p. 19).

It is important for the advisor to ensure positive experiences for students of color, especially in light of the prior less-than-satisfactory educational experiences these students may have had. Doris Wright (1987) cites the importance of providing first-year students of color guidance to participate in activities and programs in which they can experience success. Like Frost (1991), Wright (1987) concludes that early success will better prepare students to accept more risky and challenging tasks.

Beyond establishing rapport with the student of color, it is important to structure the meaning, benefits, and methods of advising. On the whole, people of color are likely to have had limited experiences with advising-type interactions beyond the extended family (Sue & Sue, 1990; Vontress, 1981). Consequently, it is essential for advisors to structure advising sessions to clarify the purposes, goals, and methods of academic advising and, thus, to reduce advisee hesitancy. For example, the advisor should begin by inquiring about the student's prior advising experiences and level of satisfaction. If the advisor senses that the student is unfamiliar with advising, the advisor should define advising, academic planning, and the decision-making process; outline roles and responsibilities; and discuss what may be gained from talking about issues and problems. It is particularly important to set forth the confidential nature of advising and the fact that *very little* can legally be shared with anyone, inside or outside the institution, without the expressed consent of the advisee.

Another characteristic of advising that may be in conflict with the cultural experiences of many students of color is that advising is often non-directive. An egalitarian presumption underlying advising calls for the advisor to set forth a range of alternatives while the advisee makes the final decision about an appropriate course of action. This perspective is often at odds with role relationship experiences which stress hierarchical patterns of interaction and deference to authority.

In setting forth "Third World Group Variables for Counseling," Sue and Sue (1990) identify the need that many people of color have for concrete, tangible, structured approaches to addressing and resolving issues and problems. Many students of color see advisors as "experts" (i.e., authority figures) who have the "right" answers and "know" what they should do. The non-directive approach which underlies current advising practices may not engage these students in a developmentally appropriate way (Brown & Rivas, 1994). Indeed, many of these students may interpret an unwillingness to provide directive responses to immediate needs and problems as evasive or as evidence of disinterest and inability to be of assistance.

Many students of color come from family situations in which roles are well defined and expectations clear. For example, Vietnamese children are taught from an early age to listen to authority figures and speak only when asked to do so. Advice, questions, and opinions are not encouraged (Do, 1983). Likewise, Attneave (1982) observes that in most American-Indian and Alaskan-Native social settings, the dominant person is expected to be active and the subordinate person shows respect by quiet attentiveness. Similar

dynamics of interaction with authority figures have also been observed for Latinos (Bernal & Flores-Ortiz, 1982), rural Blacks (Vontress, 1981), and Puerto Ricans (Garcia-Preto, 1982). In their study of counseling style preferences, Exum and Lau (1988) found that Chinese students rate the directive approach more positively than a non-directive style. Similarly, Ruiz and Casas (1981) highlight the importance of using a directive approach when engaging Chicano college students. The unwillingness of the advisor to accept the role of providing direction may be unsettling to many students of color and leave them confused, disoriented, and dissatisfied with the advising encounter. This may be one of the reasons why students of color underutilize advising and other student services.

Advisors may want to say, "Students shouldn't feel that way," but it does not matter what students *should* feel; it is what they *do* feel and experience that must be the advisor's concern. This is especially so if we believe and are committed to the ideal that students are the center of our work as educators. Our challenge as advisors is to help students move from where they are to where they need and want to be as they pursue their personal and educational development in our institutions. (These students may, in fact, respond more favorably to "intrusive" advising methods described by Glennen and Vowell in Chapter 8)

*Accessing Support Services on Campus*

Many students of color who survive the elementary educational systems to enroll in college have succeeded where their peers have failed because they have managed to persist through a combination of hard work, resolve, and self-reliance. Unfortunately, many of these students are often reluctant to seek out others for assistance and support in times of need because to do so is perceived to be a sign of weakness and dependence. Other barriers to seeking help include lack of language facility, underrepresentation of advisors who share the students' ethnicities, culturally insensitive advisors, and even uncertainty about how to ask for help. Thus, these students too often underutilize campus resources such as the learning center, the advising office, counseling and psychological services, courses in ethnic studies, and mentoring programs. Advisors must encourage students to overcome their hesitance to seek appropriate assistance and promote the development of effective help-seeking behaviors.

In order to connect students of color to valuable campus resources, advisors must be thoroughly knowledgeable about the sources of assistance available on campus and in the community. These may range from courses designed to support the identity development of the students, to group study opportunities, to courses or workshops that can assist students in developing specific skills. An especially effective way for advisors to become familiar with the different support services is by visiting them and becoming acquainted with programs and the staff who manage them. Engaging in this kind of personal networking is especially important to the work of advisors because it creates a necessary communication link between them and support services. Gaining firsthand knowledge of a service and developing personal relationships with the people who work there will assist advisors in making more personalized, clearly defined, and effective student referrals. This is important for many students of color because, in addition to being unaware of service opportunities and reluctant to use them, they often doubt the sincerity and usefulness of assistance providers.

With regard to the centrality of financial concerns for many students of color, advisors should have a basic awareness of where students can be referred for assistance with financial aid, on-campus employment, or emergency grants and loans. Advisors should be perceptive in identifying financial problems and challenges that arise. For example, some students cannot buy books because all available monies have been used to pay tuition, fees, child care, or other living expenses. Other students are reluctant to use loan resources because of concerns about their prospects for repayment. Still others assume financial responsibilities or take jobs that adversely impact their ability to focus adequate time and energy on their studies. Academic integration and the pursuit of excellence are often impeded by concerns students

have about meeting their basic needs. Advisors can play a vital role by connecting students to sources of financial assistance and by coaching, guiding, and supporting students in understanding the importance of defining and prioritizing their needs.

**Responding to Issues of Identity Development**

The effective advisor must be willing to respect and support the social identity development of students of color. For example, this means not responding defensively or punitively to a Black student who is in the previously described angry "encounter" stage of development (Cross, 1971) and who may display overt hostility and resistance to the most culturally sensitive professional of different ethnicity. Shelby Steele (1990) notes that to be Black in America is to be a member of this nation's most despised and denigrated group. Advisors must recognize that many students of color have been expected to learn and develop in hostile environments (Wright, 1987). A single positive and respectful encounter with an aware advisor could be the catalyst that facilitates student development toward internalization, self-acceptance, and full engagement in the academic enterprise.

A positive encounter calls for more than just a positive statement made to the student. To support students of color in their development, the academic advisor must learn about the various resources on campus that can facilitate students' development. The following are offered as examples of resources with which advisors should become familiar:

- Advisors must become aware of resources on campus and in the community that will contribute to the identity development of minority students.

- Advisors must familiarize themselves with courses that include a focus on the history, achievements, and challenges confronted by individuals from minority backgrounds. They should also examine their own attitudes toward courses in ethnic studies and learn more about these courses and what they offer all students, and students of color in particular.

- Effective advisors must learn about campus organizations and programs that will allow minority students to become involved, develop leadership capabilities, and contribute to a campus environment in which the many cultures that comprise these communities can be understood and respected. Frequently organizations like the Black Students Union, Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano Atzlan (MEChA), or the Asian-Pacific Club provide a primary source of networking, social and academic support, and leadership development opportunities for minority students on predominantly White campuses.

- Advisors must seek out and encourage students' involvement with role models and mentors within the campus community and the community-at-large. Possible mentors and role models include faculty, staff, alumni, upper-division students, and graduate students. All students need role models, but they do not necessarily have to share the same ethnicity as the student. Commitment, sensitivity, and personal concern are the keys to effective mentoring relationships.

Finally, the academic advisor has a key role to play in advising or referring students to sources of assistance where problems beyond the academic can be addressed and resolved. When students experience advisors as competent in responding to their immediate needs, and when their advisors are genuine and caring, there is a greater likelihood that the student will be able to use this initial rapport as the foundation for dealing with more significant, long-term issues of academic integration and achievement.

**Assisting Students to Develop Confidence and Competence**

As already noted, many students of color come to college with doubts about their ability to succeed. The advisor can increase students' confidence and commitment first, by expressing belief in students, and second, by assisting students to understand and learn the process that

leads to organizing and directing their efforts to achieving success in college. With regard to cognitive skill development, advisors must orient students of color to the specific skills that are fundamental to success in college. In doing so, advisors must be clear in helping students define the array of skills that college will require them to develop, enhance, and use. A useful framework for achieving this objective is Benjamin Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of learning objectives wherein Bloom outlines the various skills that students develop as they proceed through their learning experiences.

Along with the generalized skill areas above, it is important that advisors orient students of color to the specific demands of their chosen major. For example, a faculty advisor in the area of biology might identify the following skills as necessary for students of color to develop in order to ensure success: ability to organize information into categories to solve problems; ability to formulate questions; ability to work alone for long periods of time; and an inquisitive nature, reflecting a desire to make sense of the world around them (J. Matsui, personal communication, September 16, 1991).

Effectively advising students of color means identifying and utilizing strategies that are appropriate for them and their needs. For example, Rivas (1990) has developed a task-focused academic advising model, the "Zero-100% Method," that takes into account the social-psychological development of students of color. Specifically, this model describes how negative developmental experiences in education can undermine the student's ability to work hard, persist, and succeed in college. Central to this approach is the message that the student must focus on the task of developing competence (White, 1959) in college and in satisfying the human "need to know" (Maslow, 1968). The method uses the following six steps to provide the advisor and the student with a structure to organize and approach the challenges of college:

- Review the student's academic record and learning history, looking for strengths and insights, weaknesses and lack of insights.
- Define the student's personal, educational and career goals, and related skills that must be developed to achieve desired goals.
- Assess the student's initial skill level (0-100%) in those areas identified as essential to achievement, making use of interpersonal approaches already discussed in this chapter.
- Establish standards of excellence (0-100%) that the student will work toward in each of the identified skill areas.
- Identify curricular, co-curricular, and community learning experiences that will assist in developing skills and achieving desired goals.
- On a continuous basis, review and evaluate progress toward goal achievement and skill development.

The Zero-100% Method is perceived by students to be an understandable and straightforward way to assess their readiness for specific tasks in college. There are two important requisites, however, that advisors should consider when using this approach. First, they should be straightforward about the necessity of realistically appraising students' skill levels vis-a-vis the demands of college and future careers; and second, they should effectively communicate a sincere commitment to advise and support students' work toward skill development. To assist students in this process, which can be threatening, students are encouraged to focus on the task of becoming skillful (task-involved) versus the comparison of self to real or imagined "others" in a particular group (ego-involved) (Nicholls, 1984). Comparing self to others, especially when skills are low, can lead to feelings of shame, doubt, hopelessness, or helplessness. These negative feelings can undermine efforts to develop competence (Weiner, 1985).

Once students have realistically appraised their skill levels, advisors assist them in planning an academic program to achieve desired competency levels. For example, a student who is ill-at-ease participating in class or speaking in

public could take a speech course to learn how to organize presentations, be more comfortable talking before a group, or effectively support an argument with details and facts. In the process of the student's taking classes, the advisor and student are able to verify the student's initial self-appraisal and make appropriate changes in the student's academic program. For example, a student who rated herself a 40 in oral communication might discover that she has strengths that would lead to a higher skill rating (possibly 60) because she has excellent stage presence; however, in order to use this stage presence effectively she needs to improve her level of preparation, research, and practice before making a presentation.

Levin and Levin (1991) review research and intervention programs for at-risk minority college students and offer some suggestions for effective interventions. Although many of the suggestions did not come directly from advisor efforts, some of the approaches are potentially adaptable by advisors in their work with students of color. One of the major findings of the Levin and Levin study, which is supported by the work of Astin (1985), is that "quality interaction with faculty seems to be more important than any other single college factor in determining minority student persistence" (p. 324). With regard to skills that students need to develop in college, advisors need to discover ways to facilitate ethnic minority students' "quality interaction" with faculty. These efforts must extend beyond simple referral of students to faculty. Advisors must acquaint students of color with the importance of interacting with professors; advisors must also teach these students to communicate and interact effectively and successfully with faculty. Furthermore, advisors must work closely with faculty to develop structured mentor programs that produce quality interaction between students and faculty.

Another finding of the Levin and Levin (1991) study applicable to the work of advisors is that encouraging students of color to work in groups is especially useful in promoting academic success. The work of Uri Treisman (1985) with African-American students in mathematics at the University of California-Berkeley demonstrates how study groups can produce high levels of success in the most challenging areas of the curriculum. Similarly, Grites (1984) observes that the group approach highlights the commonality of student concerns and that group advising is an effective advising method. This is an area where advisors can work to promote academically-focused peer group interactions (Rivas, 1988). Such interactions are fundamental to increased academic and social integration and therefore merit consideration by advisors in their work with students of color.

Becoming a skilled student means learning how to function effectively in areas that ensure success. This means becoming skilled in budgeting time, revising and rewriting essays, and reading books for key points. The advisor should assist students of color in identifying the "behavior" skills they need to develop or improve in order to maximize opportunities for success, such as, knowing *where* to study, *how* to concentrate when studying, and *how* to form study groups. In this regard, students of color too often do not understand the importance of establishing a routine when studying or how valuable it can be to study in groups. Here the advisor can orient the student to specific approaches to studying which will be successful for that student.

When working on skill development issues with students of color, the advisor and the student will be confronted with many developmental challenges: managing emotions such as doubt and anger, establishing an identity as a person of color, developing the ability to trust and support oneself in an environment that may not always be positive and supportive, and developing the ability to trust and reach out to others when requiring assistance. The advisor should not expect to work on these various tasks alone with the student. Rather, the advisor must help the student gain knowledge and make use of academic and student support services that can be of assistance. If the advisor has become familiar with the resources available and, more especially, with the people who staff these services, all that remains is to use the established rapport to convince the student that these experiences are of value in effectively managing the challenges of college.

## Summary

The "self in transition" is an apt descriptor of what the student of color experiences during the first year of college. This "self in transition" is at the heart of development: an amalgam of strengths and weaknesses, hopes and fears, insights and questions. The academic environment forms the context within which the "self in transition" becomes enhanced, strengthened, and transformed into an integrated individual.

In this chapter we have painted a portrait of a diverse student group that makes up the mural that in common parlance has come to be known as "students of color" or "multicultural students." We have also identified how these students have been affected by an environment that does not support and facilitate the development of their cognitive, behavioral, and emotional selves. In this regard, we have stressed the importance of a campus system that is supportive of diverse populations. We have highlighted the importance of and the need for advisor's being knowledgeable about the ability, resolve, resilience, commitment, and leadership that combined to allow these students to enroll in college despite an educational system that frequently works against them. Finally, we have indicated how a pluralistically competent academic advisor can play a major role in the development of these students.

Arthur Chickering (1994) affirms that assisting students to make an effective transition to college is "far and away the most important responsibility for academic advisors" (p. 50). Chickering also asks what advisors should do to help students move into college. For first-year students of color, the answer lies in the guidance and support that can be provided by a competent pluralistic advisor. A pluralistic approach requires advisors to understand the realities of human diversity and to have an awareness that cultural difference has a powerful impact on how students experience themselves and their place in college. Pluralistic advisors take stock of their own attitudes, biases, and beliefs about students whose ethnicity and cultural backgrounds differ from their own. Such advisors consciously endeavor to increase their knowledge and to eliminate behaviors that interfere with their ability to support and assist *all* students. Pluralistic advisors are committed to understanding and valuing difference as it is manifested in increasingly multicultural campus environments. Finally, they are willing to adapt their advising methods to accommodate the needs of today's diverse student populations.

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Covington, M. V. (1992). *Making the grade: A self-worth perspective on motivation and school reform*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

The search for self-acceptance or self-worth is "the highest human priority," proffers Covington. In this book, Covington applies the concepts of self-worth theory and other contemporary educational and social psychological research (e.g., attribution theory, achievement motivation) to the challenging topic of student motivation in our nation's schools. Covington's argument is that many students (specifically a large number of students of color) will often forego involvement in the academic enterprise because our educational system emphasizes individual competition over the individual's development of personal competence. This provocative book offers many concrete suggestions for how to encourage greater student involvement in learning.

Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (1990). *Counseling the culturally different*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

This book was written for counselors and is considered a classic for those working with multicultural populations. The authors suggest that "counseling" minority groups requires teaching and giving advice, both of which are, in fact, a major part of the traditional work of academic advisors. This book also provides a solid theoretical and practical guide for academic advisors working with students of color. Easy to read and free of jargon, Part 1 identifies general issues, concepts, and challenges that arise in working with multicultural populations. Chapter titles include: "Barriers to Effective Cross-Cultural Counseling," "Cross-Cultural Communication/Counseling Styles," and "Sociopolitical Considerations of Mistrust in Cross-Cultural Counseling." Part 2 identifies critical issues for four different groups: American Indians, Blacks/African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic/Latinos. Sue and Sue conclude the book with a number of critical incidents, several of which describe situations

analogous to those which arise in academic advising.

Wright, D. J. (Ed.). *Responding to the needs of today's minority students* (New Directions for Student Services No. 38). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This book is primarily intended to provide an overview of the kinds of programs and services that can contribute to creating a campus climate that is conducive to the social and academic integration of students of color. It provides a discussion of the negative context in which these students frequently must develop and learn. The book also examines their developmental issues and needs. Various authors consider the needs of African Americans/Blacks, Asian Pacific Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Native Americans. It concludes with a discussion of strategies for enhancing effectiveness with multicultural populations.

# Part 4

# Advising First-Year Students: Pathways to the Future

# CHAPTER 15

# Assessment Of Academic Advising

M. Lee Upcraft, Debra S. Srebnik, &
Jennifer Stevenson

The most ignored aspect of academic advising in general, and first-year student academic advising in particular, is assessment. The purpose of this chapter is to review briefly the current state of academic advising assessment, discuss the importance of assessment, present a model of assessing academic advising, and offer some advice about how to conduct effective assessments.

**Current State of Assessing Academic Advising**

The results of the first National Survey of Academic Advising conducted by the American College Testing Program in 1979 (Carstensen & Silberhorn, 1979) indicated that approximately 75% of the responding institutions had no assessment of their academic advising program. Subsequent national surveys (Crockett & Levitz, 1983; Habley & Crockett, 1988) indicate that the amount of advising assessment has improved somewhat, but still more than half of the institutions sampled conduct no formal assessment of their academic advising.

It is puzzling that so little assessment of academic advising takes place, since more assessment could shed light on how the many positive results attributed to academic advising are obtained. Advising has been shown to increase student retention (Chernin & Goldsmith, 1986; Forrest, 1985; Miller, 1985; Noel, 1985; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), help improve student grades (Hudesman, Avramides, Loveday, Waber, & Wendell, 1983), facilitate student career and educational decision making (Baer & Carr, 1985), and exert a positive influence on academic and personal growth and satisfaction with the college experience (Ender, Winston, & Miller, 1984). Although this research demonstrates that, overall, academic advising can promote student success, it is not clear what methods of advising and which advising models are effective, or what advisor skills result in student success. Further, there is very little research which specifically assesses the academic advising of first-year students.

**Reasons for Assessing Academic Advising**

Assessment of academic advising is useful for many reasons. First, and probably most important, a comprehensive and well-constructed

assessment program can provide a basis for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of an advising program and how it might be improved to benefit first-year students. Second, such assessments can provide a basis for maintaining and expanding resources at a time when resources in higher education are becoming much more scarce. Third, a good assessment program can provide useful feedback to individual academic advisors and can become part of the overall evaluation of faculty performance in promotion and tenure reviews. Fourth, assessment results can be an important component of institutional and departmental strategic planning, making sure that advising is a central part of such efforts. Fifth, assessment can provide useful information to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness of academic advising. Finally, a good assessment program focusing on outcomes assessment can test and perhaps duplicate, at the local level, what the national studies cited above demonstrate: that academic advising has a powerful influence on grades, retention, and other indicators of student success.

**A Model of Academic Advising Assessment**

Assessment of academic advising can take many forms. This model is based on an overall assessment model developed by Upcraft and Schuh (in press). A comprehensive academic advising assessment should include the following six elements:

*1. Assessing First-Year Student Advising Needs*

The first component of a comprehensive academic advising assessment program is the assessment of first-year student advising needs. This type of assessment is important because inadequate academic advising is often a result of offering advising services which do not match student needs. To be sure, assessing first-year student needs is not easy, because often new students do not know what they need. We, therefore, have a duty not only to ask students what they want, but also to configure what they need based on the literature and research concerning the characteristics of first-year students, their predictable development stages, and their academic advising needs.

*2. Tracking First-Year Student Use of Advising Services*

Keeping track of the numbers and types of students who use academic advising is very important. Collecting data on how many students use services, and how they are described by gender, race, ethnicity, age, residence, and other demographic variables, can insure that academic advising is available to everyone on an equitable basis. Even if acceptable numbers of first-year students use academic advising services, we must ask if they are representative of our student population. For example, if African-American students represent 10% of the student population, but represent only 3% of those seeking academic advising, such data would point to a problem that must be addressed.

*3. Assessing First-Year Student Satisfaction with Academic Advising*

Of those entering students who take advantage of our advising program, what is their level of satisfaction? What strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement do they identify? Student satisfaction is important for obvious reasons: If they are not satisfied, they will not use the service. Getting students to use what we offer is the first step; providing what we offer in ways that satisfy them is a second very important step in building effective academic advising programs. (See Chapter 16 for annotated information about instruments which assess student satisfaction with academic advising.)

*4. Assessing First-Year Student Outcomes*

For all the first-year students who use academic advising services, is there any effect on academic achievement, persistence, career development, academic plans, or other important outcomes of academic advising? Are there measurable differences on these important outcomes between users and non-users of advising services? Studies which might answer these questions are difficult to design, implement, and interpret. However, we must attempt to assess the fundamental issues of advising: Is what we are doing having any effect, and is that effect the intended one? (Chapter 16 also

contains information about instruments which assess advising outcomes.)

5. *Comparing First-Year Student Academic Advising Programs with Programs at Other Institutions*

How does the quality of an academic advising program compare with others, both inside or outside the institution? The literature from "total quality management" (Deming, 1986) would support the notion that one important way of assessing quality is to compare oneself to other institutions which appear to be doing a better job with academic advising. The purpose is to discover how others achieve their results and then to translate their processes to one's own advising program. The key to this assessment component is to select colleges or universities which are truly comparable to one's own.

6. *Using National Standards*

How do our advising services stack up against nationally recognized standards, such as those of the Council for the Advancement of Standards mentioned earlier in this monograph? Using such standards can insure that our advising programs are meeting accepted criteria for advising excellence.

**Assessment Designs and Methodologies**

Space does not permit a thorough discussion of assessment designs and methodologies, but a brief review of the questions to be asked may give readers a framework within which to explore assessment designs further.

*What is the motivation for assessment?*

Assessment activity flows from many different causes: unmet needs, unresolved problems, external demands, research interest, etc. Because motivations for assessment are various, a clear and concise definition of the issue facing the academic advising program is the first step in the assessment process. For example, a problem may be that adult students do not often access advising services. It would be very important to know why this is true, and what to do about it.

*What is the purpose?*

The purpose usually flows from the motivating cause for assessment. In the above example, the purposes are to (a) determine why advising services are underused by adult students and (b) identify what steps must be taken to increase use.

*Who should be studied?*

The answer to this question may seem obvious, but selecting whom to study often proves difficult. In addressing the above problem, the assessor may find that the institutional definition of an adult student (if there is one at all) is unclear. Do we include all adult students, or just those studying full-time? What about non-degree adult students? Whatever the answers, the assessment should clearly identify who is being studied.

*What is the best assessment method?*

Basically, there are three choices: qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of both. Quantitative methods involve "the use of standardized measure so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can be fit into a limited number of predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned" (Patton, 1990, p. 13-14). Instruments are used to collect data, statistical methods are used to analyze data, and conclusions are drawn from collecting smaller amounts of data from larger numbers of subjects. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, involve detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviors, most typically derived from individual interviews, focus groups, document analyses, and direct observations. Most often qualitative methods involve smaller numbers of subjects studied in greater depth. The preferred assessment method depends upon the purpose of the study. In the example of the underuse of academic advising services by adult students, both are recommended. A survey of adult students, reinforced by individual

interviews and focus groups, would provide the most powerful assessment.

*What instrument(s) should be used?*

For quantitative methodologies, the measurement instrument must yield results that can be statistically analyzed. If we are fortunate, an instrument already has been developed, and there are many available, including student surveys of advisors, student surveys of advising centers, advisor-student surveys, advisor surveys, and supervisor/administrator surveys. (See Chapter 16 for a selected annotation of academic advising instruments.) If an assessment instrument is not available, one must be developed locally, and psychometric properties (for example, validity and reliability) must be determined. For qualitative methodologies, individual interview or focus group protocols must be developed, consisting of standardized, open-ended questions.

*Who should collect the data?*

At first glance, this may not seem to matter. Obviously, data should be collected by competent researchers, but often those most qualified are also those who have a vested interest in the outcome of the assessment. This is less of an issue with quantitative methodologies which are less susceptible to data collection bias. In qualitative methodologies, however, data are collected, recorded, filtered, and interpreted by researchers, and bias becomes a serious concern.

*How should data be analyzed?*

In the instance of quantitative methodologies, statistical analyses are appropriate, with all their accompanying complexities. While some statistical methods (means, medians, frequency distributions) are within the grasp of most academic advisors, more complex statistical analyses (multiple regressions, factor analyses, path analyses) should not be attempted without consultation. In the instance of qualitative methodologies, review of transcripts from interviews and focus groups provides a basis for establishing themes, most often derived from the questions on the interview protocol. However, recording, coding, and making sense out of interview and focus group data requires skill and should not be undertaken without familiarization with such techniques.

*How should results be reported?*

Too often, the finest assessment study has little impact because of the way in which it is written and reported. An effective report is best constructed on the basis of who will read it, why they will read it, and what they will do about it. A general rule is that an executive summary, no more than one page, followed by a more comprehensive summary, no more than ten pages, are the most effective means of reporting results.

*How will the results be used?*

Many assessment reports end up gathering dust on someone's shelf, but assessment is of no value if it is never used. One way to determine the impact of a study is to determine what changes, if any, were made as a result of the study. In this example, if there are no changes in the way in which academic advising is delivered to adult students, then the results were useless and the study a waste of time. Leadership is the key to how the results of a study will be used.

## Conclusion

The key to successful academic advising assessment is to view assessment as a way of improving the quality of service to first-year students. Advisors should develop an assessment program which is comprehensive, should design studies that use multiple methods, and should use assessment results in ways that ultimately improve academic advising services.

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# CHAPTER 16

# Academic Advising: A Compendium of Evaluation Instruments

Debra S. Srebnik & Jennifer Stevenson

The results of the first National Survey of Academic Advising conducted by the American College Testing Program (Carstensen & Silberhorn, 1979) reported that approximately 75% of the responding institutions had no evaluation of their academic advising program. Subsequent national surveys (Crockett & Levitz, 1983; Habley & Crockett, 1988) indicate that the amount of advising evaluation has changed only slightly in eight years. According to Habley and Crockett (1988), more than half of the institutions sampled conduct no formal evaluation of their academic advising.

It is puzzling that so little evaluation of advising takes place, because more consistent evaluation could shed light on how the many positive results attributed to academic advising are obtained. Advising has been shown to increase student retention (Chernin & Goldsmith, 1986; Forrest, 1985; Miller, 1985; Noel, 1972), help improve student grades (Hudesman, Avramides, Loveday, Waber, & Wendell, 1983), facilitate student career and educational decision making (Baer & Carr, 1985), and positively influence academic and personal growth and satisfaction with the college experience (Ender, Winston, & Miller, 1984). Although these reports demonstrate that advising can promote positive student development, it is not clear what methods of advising and which advising models are effective. Adequate evaluation of advising can help clarify effective advising components and programs to facilitate advisor self-improvement and program change.

Evaluation results can also support merit recognition and raises, promote budget changes or increased administrative support, point out areas of need for in-service training, and determine effectiveness of advisors or advising programs (Crockett, 1983). In addition, advising evaluation can be used when developing a needs assessment, reorganizing personnel, and planning future administrative policy (Grites & Kramer, 1984). Particularly, in times of "fiscal restraint, evaluation is necessary to determine program effectiveness for the users of services and for the institution" (Frisz & Lane, 1987, p. 241).

Evaluation efforts are intended to determine the value of advising methods relative to set goals.

Such outcome evaluations include both process issues (e.g., accessibility, satisfaction) and outputs (e.g., retention, student knowledge). Implementation evaluations, in contrast, may evaluate such things as service volume, training, procedures, and the like. This review will focus on instruments designed primarily to assess process issues. Outputs of advising should be examined to get a general picture of the effectiveness of advising. However, an understanding of advising implementation and processes is necessary to use output evaluation findings to alter and improve advising programs.

Key evaluation informant groups include students, advisors (self-evaluation), peers, and supervisors (Habley & Crockett, 1988). The two most commonly used informants are students and supervisory performance evaluation (Habley & Crockett, 1988). However, students' subjective perceptions should be combined with more objective output data (e.g., retention, major decision timing) and with evaluation material from other informant groups. This review of instruments used to evaluate advising is organized in terms of informant groups as follows:

- Student surveys of advisors,
- Student surveys of advising centers,
- Advisor-student surveys,
- Advisor surveys, and
- Supervisor-administrator surveys.

Surveys evaluating student services and administration follow these categories. All instruments are discussed in terms of their length, content, format, and use in fulfilling specific evaluation goals.

### Student Surveys for Evaluating Advisors

Student surveys that evaluate advisors generally provide information about how satisfied students are with advisor behaviors and characteristics. They are used to evaluate the impact of individual advisors and particular advising methods. Twenty-five such instruments were located and will be reviewed in turn.

*The Pennsylvania State University (Fayette Campus) Advising Evaluation Survey (Kapraun & Coldren, 1980).* This nine-item survey measures student satisfaction with advisor behaviors. Students respond to statements on a rating scale from 0 (needs improvement) to 4 (excellent). Statements include advisor behaviors such as availability and keeping office hours, giving accurate information and referrals, discussing long-range goals, and developing a personal and congenial rapport with students. An additional question on this survey asks whether the student feels his or her advisor has a "positive, constructive attitude toward advising in general." This very short instrument can be administered easily and quickly and its data analyzed with minimum time and expense. Because of its length, however, the information gained from its use is somewhat limited.

*Advisor Perception Inventory (Crockett, 1983).* This somewhat longer survey asks students to rate, on a six-point scale, how much they agree or disagree with 16 statements about their advisor. Statements refer to an advisor who serves as a good resource person, who is available and well prepared, who facilitates growth and transition, who listens to problems and anticipates students needs, and who is genuinely concerned with the student's welfare. The interest and concern an advisor has for a student is emphasized in the *Advisor Perception Inventory*. Five statements inquire whether the student would be comfortable "discussing personal problems" with the advisor and whether the advisor "takes an interest in [the student] that extends beyond the meetings."

*Student Evaluation Form from Justin Morrill College (Upcraft, 1971).* This survey is similar in content and length to the *Advisor Perception Inventory*. Students rate how satisfied they are with 14 advisor characteristics that include the following: availability; ability to refer to school services; help with individualizing education; and facilitation of students' self-understanding of their abilities, interests, goals, and potential. The evaluation relies on satisfied or not-satisfied

responses and is easily coded, but it lacks the subtlety of rating scale responses.

Parts of this form are idiosyncratic to Justin Morrill College. For instance, two questions ask whether advisors help students to understand the "goals" and "ideas" of Justin Morrill. With minor adaptations, however, this survey could be used by most institutions. The intent of this instrument is to evaluate an "academic assistant" program, although the questions are applicable to all advisors who help with academic decision making.

*Academic Advising Survey from The University of Texas at Austin (Hartman, 1981).* This survey takes a two-pronged approach to evaluation. In the first section, students rate how important 17 advisor characteristics are for effective advising. Specific items refer to advisor hours and availability; discussion of long-range goals; and advisor knowledge of courses, transcripts, study skills, career options, and university requirements. Other statements include, "Advisor respects confidentiality," "Advisor is willing to discuss non-academic concerns," "Advisor knows you well enough to serve as a reference," and "Advisor regards advising responsibilities as important."

In the second section, students rate how true each of the characteristics is for their own advisor. Through the information obtained, advisors will be able to evaluate which advising characteristics are most salient to their students.

*University of Wisconsin, Superior Advisor Evaluation Form (Barman & Benson, 1981).* On this form—using a five-point scale—students rate how much they agree or disagree with 19 advisor characteristic statements. Questions ask whether an advisor is usually rushed or busy, and if the advisor keeps appointments and makes the student feel at ease. The survey also contains questions regarding goals, decision making, information and resources, and student recommendations regarding the advisor. Seven of these questions rate the quality of advisor assistance in such areas as personal-social problems, selecting courses and a major, meeting requirements, clarifying career goals, developing study skills, and clarifying values. Following these 19 questions, there is an unstructured section for additional comments which allows students to elaborate on their answers or to mention topics not in the survey.

*Kansas State University Survey of Advisor Traits and Effectiveness (Polson, 1981).* In the first section of this three-part survey, students rate 16 statements about their advisor using a true-false format on a five-point scale. Many of the statements cover interpersonal aspects of advising. Examples include, "I can depend on my advisor," "My advisor views me as a burden on time," "My advisor treats me as an individual," "My advisor is approachable for personal concerns," and "Advising is a cooperative effort." This section also contains questions about career planning and advisor information.

In the second section, students rate how frequently their advisor exhibits friendliness, sincerity, respect, warmth, concern, and self-disclosure, again using a five-point scale. Last, there is a seven-question overall rating of advising. Students evaluate results of advising, such as their increased confidence in making decisions about academics, career choice, and personal concerns. This latter section attempts to tap some of the emotional and developmental outcomes from a student's relationship with an advisor.

*University of Alabama Questionnaire on Academic Advising (Hickerson, 1982).* The first section of this three-section questionnaire contains ten yes-or-no questions regarding whether the advisor offers "necessary information" about college policies, resources, courses, academic matters, and career options. The second section includes six questions about advisor qualities, such as interest, courtesy, respect, and flexibility. Using a five-point scale, students evaluate how much the advisor exhibits these qualities. The final section of the questionnaire deals with student's contact with the dean's office.

*Counseling and Advisement Center Questionnaire, City University of New York (Frisz & Lane, 1987).* This questionnaire begins with a personal profile of sex, age, class, major, and grade-point

average. Students are asked how they found out about the services, their reasons for using the center, if they would use it again, and if they would recommend it to friends. Also, students rate on a Likert-type scale whether their advisors are receptive, competent, knowledgeable to provide alternatives, and able to listen to and deal with student concerns. A final open-ended section is left for students to make any additional comments.

*Academic Advising Inventory (AAI) (Winston & Sandor, 1985).* The AAI is available from Student Development Associates, Inc. This group also produces the *Advising Conference Record*, a tool to help advisors document their activities and structure advising sessions. Documented information on reliability and validity for the AAI is available.

The AAI contains four parts: developmental prescriptive advising, advising activities, student satisfaction with advising, and demographic information. There is an optional fifth section for local items. The first and most unique section contains 14 questions allowing students to describe the nature of the advisor-advisee relationship. Here, prescriptive advising is "characterized by a mechanical, formal interpersonal relationship that is based on authority," while developmental advising is "evident when the advisor and student share responsibilities for advising tasks, and advising is based on a concern for the student's total education and personal development." This section has three subscales: personalizing education, academic decision making, and selecting courses. The second, third, and fourth sections, like previously mentioned surveys, explore satisfaction with and information about classes, goals, and institutional policies, as well as student demographic characteristics.

*Prescriptive-Developmental Academic Advising Continua (Crockett, 1988).* This 22-item survey, adapted from the AAI, asks evaluators to "select either a prescriptive or developmental description of ideal academic advising" for each item and then indicate how "important" that statement is on a four-point scale. This instrument could be completed by students, advisors, or administrators.

*Preferred Counselor Behaviors Survey (Newman & Caple, 1974).* This survey was developed for use with counselors but could also be used with advisors. Students respond to items by saying whether or not they prefer a particular counselor behavior. There are 18 items in three, six-item sections. The first section includes items similar to the developmental-prescriptive section of the AAI. Examples include advisor "tells me what he thinks I should do" and "helps me to make the decision." The second section deals with the counselor's interest, respect, and friendliness toward the student. The third section addresses counselor actions, such as discussion of goals and expression of the counselor's approval and opinions. This instrument relies heavily on questions dealing with the interpersonal relationship between the student and counselor. It lacks specific questions about counselor knowledge of academic concerns, institutional information, and career options.

*Evaluation of Counselors Scale (Shaffer, Murillo, & Michael, 1981).* This is another survey meant for counselors which could be adapted or used in conjunction with an advisor survey. Four factors emerged from a factor analysis of the 19 items: student's personal growth, positive atmosphere of counseling center, trust or confidence in counselor, and competence in test interpretation and academic-career counseling. The largest and most unique cluster of questions are within the personal growth factor which contains eight questions such as counselor "seemed to know exactly what I felt and meant," "encouraged me to make my own decisions," and "accepted me even when there was disagreement." Two statements included on the scale—"my counselor seemed fair and unbiased" and "counselor seemed to misunderstand my problems"—did not load significantly onto any of the factors.

*Counselor Evaluation Inventory (Brown, Frey, & Crapo, 1972).* The 21 items on this inventory are rated on a five-point scale. This inventory has three subscales. The first, counseling climate, includes statements such as, "I felt the counselor accepted me as an individual," "I distrusted the counselor," and "The counselor acted cold and distant." The counselor comfort subscale

includes items such as, "The counselor seemed restless while talking to me," and "The counselor acted uncertain." The third subscale, client satisfaction, contains items such as, "I felt comfortable in my interview with the counselor," and "Other students could be helped by talking with the counselor." Questions in this category also refer to the student's comfort with testing. This is the only survey that makes specific reference to testing and discussion of test results.

*Rush Medical College Advising Questionnaire (Eckenfels, Blacklow, & Gotterer, 1984).* On this questionnaire medical students are asked to identify their sources of advising information and rate the overall quality of academic, personal, and career counseling at their institution. Students also rate their satisfaction with individual advisors and their advisor-advisee relationship using the same grading scale used by faculty to rate them ("honors," "high pass," "pass," and "fail"). Additionally, they report the frequency and nature of interactions with their advisor.

*Emporia State University Questionnaire on Academic Advising (Vowell & Karst, 1987).* This six-item survey measures student satisfaction with advisor behaviors. Students respond to questions such as "Was the advisor a good listener?" and "Did the advisor exhibit an interest in you as a person?" This short survey was designed to assess freshman students' perceptions of an intrusive advising program. With minor adaptations, it could be used by most institutions. Because of its length, however, the information gained from its use is somewhat limited.

*John Abbott College Student Questionnaire on Academic Advising (Neale & Sidorenko, 1988).* This questionnaire asks students to rate advisor behavior—on a five-point scale—in three main areas: accessibility and availability to students, interpersonal skills, and quality of information communicated to students. A fourth section is designed to gather pertinent student information and to assess student satisfaction overall. Finally, there is an unstructured section for additional student comments about their advising experiences at the institution.

*Descy Attitude Towards Advisors Scale (DATAS) (Descy, 1991).* Using a five-point scale, students rate how much they agree that their primary advisor possesses 24 characteristics. Items were written to reflect four areas of advisor behavior which graduate students identified as important for successful advising: personality, knowledge, accessibility, and knowledge about careers. Statements refer to an advisor who "is fair" and "is knowledgeable about career placement." All four factors are reported to have adequate reliabilities. This questionnaire was developed for use with graduate students; however, it could also be appropriate for undergraduate advisor evaluation.

*University of Louisville Academic Advisement Student Questionnaire (McAnulty, O'Connor, & Sklare, 1987).* This 21-item survey measures student satisfaction with advisor behaviors. This instrument asks students about their level of involvement with advising resources. Students then rate—from "excellent" ("My advisor shows this behavior in almost all situations") to "poor" ("My advisor never shows this behavior")—how frequently their primary advisor engages in certain advising behaviors. Student demographic questions are also included. Finally, an open-ended "Comments and Suggestions" section allows students to provide more feedback about their advising experience at the institution.

*Bowling Green State University Effectiveness of Advisement Service Survey (Wood & Wood, 1989).* This 57-item instrument has three parts. In the first section, students are asked about their class status, involvement with advising resources, and about the functions advisors should serve. In the second section, students rate the helpfulness of their advisor. Then they are asked to rate how "true" several statements are about their advisor. To assess overall satisfaction with an advisor and their opinions about advising services, students rate how much they "agree" with several statements. Statements include, "I would recommend my advisor to a friend in my situation," and "Faculty advisors should be evaluated regularly." The third section allows students to suggest areas for improvement in campus advising.

Note that this questionnaire was developed to evaluate College of Education advisement at Bowling Green State University. There are several questions which refer to specific programs at this university. However, these questions may be omitted or altered for general use.

*Community College of Allegheny County, Homewood-Brushton Branch Student Advising Questionnaire (Poole, 1992).* This is a seven-item survey on which students evaluate the "helpfulness" of an advisor with certain advising tasks. Students are first asked when they entered the institution and their level of involvement with an individual advisor. Next they are instructed to mark whether or not advising has helped them with 12 statements such as "to solve course schedule problems" and "to set clear academic goals." This instrument also provides space for comments. Several of the questions refer to idiosyncratic programs at this institution. Because of the length of this questionnaire, the information gained from its use is somewhat limited.

*Survey of Academic Advising (SAA) (American College Testing Program, 1989).* This survey is composed of three main sections. In the first section students answer pertinent demographic questions. In the second section students are asked whether or not they have discussed 18 advising topics with their advisors and their satisfaction with the assistance received for each of these topics. In the last section students rate how much they agree with 36 statements about their advisor's behavior. Statements include, "My advisor knows who I am," and "My advisor allows sufficient time to discuss issues or problems."

*Questionnaire from Genesee Community College (Lechner, 1984).* This four-item instrument asks students, using a "yes" or "no" format, if their advisor "expressed genuine interests and concern" about their academic progress, and "was available when needed throughout the year." Evaluators also rate their advisor overall on a five-point scale from "poor" to "excellent." In a final open-ended question, students are asked to provide suggestions for improving advising at their institution. This very brief survey would need to be used in conjunction with others to provide a thorough evaluation.

*North Central College Advising Survey (Kelley & Lynch, 1991).* This survey can be used for student evaluation of advisor behaviors and consists of 50 items referring to a primary advisor. These statements were developed using a "free response method." Students were asked "to list things that an excellent advisor should do and things that the advisor should not do." A 50-item structured questionnaire with four main evaluation dimensions was then constructed to reflect student responses. The dimensions are: socio-emotional skills ("sincere and open minded"), meeting dynamics ("organized and on time"), advisor problems ("not friendly and does not listen"), and knowledge ("knows the system and knows graduation requirements"). The socio-emotional dimension was further analyzed, and three subfactors emerged: academic concern ("concerned with my academic life"), personal concern ("really listens to me"), and personality ("has a good sense of humor").

Students rate how well each of the statements describes their current advisor using a five-point scale. They are also asked to rate the advisor's overall effectiveness and how much they respect him/her. Additionally, demographic information about both the student and advisor is collected. An analysis of internal reliability indicates that the scales were internally consistent for both the primary and secondary factors.

*The Cross Cultural Counseling Inventory (CCCI revised) (LaFrombroise, Coleman & Hernandez, 1991).* This is a 20-item survey which measures "student perceptions of a counselor's cross-cultural competence. Students rate on a six-point scale how much a counselor's behavior corresponds with several statements. Statements include, "Counselor values and respects cultural differences," and "Counselor demonstrates knowledge about client's culture." The alpha reliability coefficient established for this instrument is .95. It has also been judged to have adequate content validity.

*University of Texas at Austin Academic Advising Evaluation Instrument (Hanson & Raney, 1993).* This instrument is comprised of three sections. Students are first asked about their amount of contact and satisfaction with different types of

advising resources on campus. Students then rate their satisfaction with individual faculty, professional, and peer advisors on 19 advising topics. A final unstructured section allows students to comment on their most positive and negative academic advising experiences at the institution and to give suggestions for improvement. This questionnaire assesses student satisfaction with different types of advising resources on campus as well as individual advisors in the same survey.

### Interviews/Focus Groups

Interview and focus group methodology has been used to complement student surveys that evaluate academic advising. Such qualitative methods can support and give richer meaning to survey findings and can help highlight areas surveys may not assess. The following two examples describe the applications of focus group and interview methods for academic advising.

*Brigham Young University.* At Brigham Young, a student focus group was formed to gain feedback on campus advising services. Eighteen randomly selected undergraduates from each class participated in several two hour sessions. A professor of counselor education served as the group's facilitator. A set of discussion questions and related material was sent to students prior to each meeting. Focus group members responded to open-ended questions such as, "Which orientation activities do you think are most important?" and "Does the survey measure the areas of advisement that you feel are important?" Areas for discussion included "orientation schedule," "advisement center survey," "new student mailings," "advisement publication sent to freshmen," and "presentations for freshmen." Students were also encouraged to suggest other issues for group debate. According to Kramer (1992), the focus group served as a useful addition to other advisement evaluation techniques. However, the reported questions utilized by the facilitator are idiosyncratic to programs at this university.

*Arizona State University.* As part of a research project for assessing advising resources (Padilla & Pavel, 1994), 24 upper-level undergraduate Hispanic and Native-American students at Arizona State University participated in structured interviews (consisting of 15 questions) about their advising experience. Students were first asked whether or not they have an academic advisor. If they said yes, they were asked, "What is your academic advisor like?" If not, the interviewer inquired about their source for advising information. Next, students were asked where their "Hispanic or Native-American friends go to get academic advice?" According to the authors, the first probe was designed to filter out students with and without advisors. The second question was a "projective technique" to elicit responses about advising from more reticent students. From students' answers, the authors derived three key questions as a basis of a model of academic advising: "Are there different types of academic advisors?" "What do academic advisors do when they advise?" and "How do academic advisors do advising?"

This study found that students identified three types of advisors: assigned, minority, and "surrogate" (those with no official status as an advisor). Minority and surrogate advisors were perceived more positively by students than assigned advisors. In response to the question about an advisor's role, students reported three central functions: "approving a student's academic program," "providing information on a broad range of topics," and "mediating between the student and the university."

Students identified three desirable advisor characteristics in response to the question, "How do advisors advise?" These were sensitivity, open-mindedness, and responsiveness to students' needs.

### Student Surveys for Evaluating Advising Centers

Four surveys focusing on evaluation of advising centers rather than individual advisors, vary widely in their length, format, and content.

*Counseling Services Satisfaction Questionnaire (Lamb & Clack, 1974).* This questionnaire contains six items which students rate using a five-point scale. The questions deal with students'

feelings about the counseling center, their reaction to the physical building, confidentiality, and whether or not the student would recommend the center to a friend. This very short questionnaire gives information about the counseling service in general, and this survey may be supplemented with information from an additional questionnaire if advisors within the center are to be evaluated individually.

*Advising Services Questionnaire (Kramer, Arrington, & Chynoweth, 1985).* This questionnaire contains 49 items. Students make a detailed evaluation of advisor activities at the center, rating how much they agree or disagree with statements on a five-point scale. The statement topics include advisor-advisee rapport; advisor availability; the center's atmosphere; and the quality and types of information available regarding courses, academic requirements, institutional policies, and career options. Students also give their opinions about the role of faculty advising. Thus, the instrument is most appropriate for institutions using faculty advisors as well as professional academic advisors. Examples of survey statements include, "I feel comfortable visiting my college advisement center." "The staff is knowledgeable about academic requirements," "There is an atmosphere of warmth and professionalism in the college advisement center," "I believe the center is a place to learn what is involved in choosing a major," and "My faculty advisor helps me develop my educational goals."

*Academic Advising Center Evaluation Form* (Kaufman, 1985). This form, developed at the University of Iowa, combines evaluation of an advising center with evaluation of an individual advisor in a total of 24 items. The first section asks the student to "comment on your advising experience" and a blank is left to fill in. Students are also asked how many times they have visited the advising center and the reasons for the visits.

Using a five-point scale in the second section, students rate how much they agree or disagree with 12 questions. These questions cover whether their advisor demonstrated knowledge of the institution and courses, took an interest in the student and listened to him or her, encouraged the student to find his or her own information, and helped students consider options without deciding for them.

Students respond to questions in the final section about whether the advising center and its personnel have been helpful and if they felt comfortable coming to the center. The last two questions are open-ended: "What suggestions would you offer your advisor?" and "What specific things do you wish your advisor had or had not done?"

*Iowa State University, College of Engineering Advising Survey (Jaffe & Huba, 1990).* This survey asks students which services they utilized on campus when seeking information about a variety of topics such as "curriculum planning" and "career guidance." Students then rate these advising resources on a ten-point scale from "excellent" to "poor."

### Advisor-Student Surveys

Seven surveys include separate forms for advisors and students. Most often questions on the two forms are parallel, so results can be compared and contrasted easily.

*Student and Advisor Evaluation Questionnaire (Stickle, 1982).* This very short five-question survey asks advisors whether they feel very helpful, moderately helpful, or not helpful in discussing educational programs, class scheduling, academic problems, personal problems, and occupational plans. Students rate whether they feel their advisor has been very helpful, moderately helpful, or not helpful on the same five criteria.

*Advisor Information Form and the Advising Survey Form (Kramer & Gardner, 1979).* These forms are available from the Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development at Kansas State University. On the Advisor Information Form, advisors rank ten advising activities using a three-point scale. Examples of activities include the following: helping with course scheduling and major selection, exploring majors, advising about vocational and educational options, discussing

goals, being someone with whom the advisee can discuss personal concerns, and encouraging advisee's personal and intellectual growth. Advisors are also asked how many students they see and how long they have been advising.

Students complete the Advising Survey Form and rate, on a five-point scale, how helpful their advisor is on the same ten advising activities as on the Advisor Information Form. Students also rate how descriptive are 22 advisor characteristics of their own advisor. Example items include, advisor "summarized my comments," "seemed relaxed while talking to me," "put limits on the types of topics I could bring up," "used knowledge of career opportunities to advise me," "was easy to see," and "challenged me to higher academic performance."

Along with some demographic questions, there is a section on advising results. Advisees are asked if they are "more confident in pursuing an academic program," "more prepared to seek a job," and "better able to handle personal problems," in addition to questions about the value they place on having a good advisor, and whether they "worked hard" to make advising a success. Preliminary reliability and validity data are available for these instruments.

*Academic Advising Survey (Grites, 1984a).* This survey uses the term "preceptor" instead of "advisor." When advisors are faculty members, this term may be more appropriate. On the form for advisees, students rate, on a five-point scale, how much they agree or disagree with 16 advisor behaviors and characteristics. Statements include discussion content between the student and preceptor such as goals, academic matters, and career plans. Students also respond to questions about whether their preceptor suggests resources and encourages decision making, and whether the student feels responsible to the preceptor for meeting requirements.

On the second form, advisors rate how much they agree that the same statements describe their own behavior. There are also questions to advisors about resource usage (idiosyncratic to Stockton State), and open-ended questions regarding advising improvement, rewards, and advisor qualifications. In addition, there is space at the end of each form for advisors and students to make open-ended general suggestions to improve advising.

*Advising Satisfaction Questionnaire (Grites, 1985).* This questionnaire begins with demographic information and follows with 23 advisor characteristic statements. Using a five-point scale, students rate how much they agree or disagree with the statements about advisor availability and frequency of use, advisor knowledge of and concern about the student, advisor knowledge of requirements, student satisfaction with and willingness to recommend the advisor, and the climate of the advising session. The last theme is characterized by the statements, "Advisor usually appears rushed," "Advisor usually appears cold," or "Advisor makes me feel at ease."

Advisors rate whether or not they feel the same 23 statements are descriptive of them. Twenty additional items comprise an advising quiz that deals with institutional information that advisors should know. In its present state, this quiz is only suitable for Stockton State College, but a similar quiz could be developed for any institution.

*University of California, Santa Barbara Questionnaire on Academic Advising (McKinney & Hartwig, 1981).* This questionnaire asks advisors 22 questions dealing with how often particular advising resources are used, if they feel advising in their department is adequate, how advising is viewed by advisors, and if students are aware of and frequently use advising services. Students answer many of the same questions, in addition to which institutional resources they feel are the most helpful to them. The students' evaluation is shorter and less detailed.

*University of Texas at Austin Peer Advisor Evaluation Instrument (Hartman & Lagowski, 1982).* This instrument is a three-part questionnaire which was designed to be completed independently by both the peer advisor and his/her supervisor. In the first part, the peer advisor may be rated from "exceptional" to "below average" on ten advisor characteristics such as "initiative" and "use of resources" with "behavioral anchors."

In the second part, evaluators may comment on the peer advisors' specific strengths and weaknesses or concerns. In the third part, evaluators are asked to list specific future objectives for the peer advisor to meet. According to the authors, a useful evaluation strategy may be for the peer advisor and supervisor to discuss their respective ratings together.

*University of Illinois Advising Questionnaire (Stokes, 1992).* This is a four-item survey which asks students about their satisfaction with faculty advisement. A preliminary screening question asks students if they have made an appointment with a faculty advisor. Students who have failed to do so are asked what has prevented them from making an appointment. If students have met with a faculty advisor, they rate their comfort level during the session, the helpfulness of the meeting, and the interest level of the advisor.

The authors also designed a faculty advisor companion to the student questionnaire. For each advisee, faculty report the session's length and content. Advisors also rate their comfort level during the session and how helpful they believe it was for the student. Note that this questionnaire was designed to measure the success of an assigned faculty advisor system. However, this instrument may be useful to assess the volume and perceived quality of faculty advising at any institution.

### Advisor Surveys

Five advising evaluation instruments, administered to advisors alone, deal with issues such as advising rewards, attitudes toward advisees, advising objectives, and advising resources usage. These instruments can help administrators know how advisors feel about their work and level of support.

*University of Nebraska Advisor Checklist (Crockett, 1983).* This checklist contains 41 questions divided into five components: advisor availability, information, helping, advisee behavior, and satisfaction with advisees. The information and availability sections are very similar to many other surveys. However, the helping, advisee behavior, and satisfaction sections are quite unique. Examples of statements from the helping section include the following: "When a goal an advisee has set is unrealistic or impossible in my opinion, I explore this with the advisee," "I do not make decisions for my advisees, but place most of my emphasis on helping them make decisions for themselves," and "I help my advisees with problems involving study skills or low academic performance." The advisee behavior section includes the following statements: "When an advisee disagrees with something I say, I try not to become defensive about it," "With respect to ability, I focus on my advisees' potentialities rather than their limitations," and "I feel helpful in trying to sort out some of the frustrations and uncertainties my advisees experience in coping with college." The satisfaction section includes, "With respect to motivation, my advisees are active and striving rather than passive and in need of prodding," "I like my advisees," and "My advisees appreciate the work I go through to help them." These questions elicit information about how the advisor feels about advisees and how he or she views the advisor-advisee relationship.

*Advisor Checklist (Grites, 1984b).* This checklist contains three sections of daily advising practices: preparation, practice, and follow-up. It is best used as a reminder to do specific activities at each advising appointment. Example statements include, "I have posted my office hours and other times that I am available for advising," "We have reviewed specific graduation requirements," "I clarified certain misunderstandings," and "I made specific notes about my advisee's situation." If used at each advising appointment, the compiled checklists could assist in advisor self-evaluation.

*Sample Questionnaire on Faculty Advising (Young, 1985).* This short, nine-item questionnaire asks advisors to discuss their six advising objectives and how they feel advising could be improved. Advisors comment on their objectives in a short-answer format. The objectives include: establishing rapport, major and career information, acting as a liaison between students and instructor, advising on career plans, handling paperwork, and interpreting academic regulations.

Advisors also respond to how advising can be made more effective. From this survey, administrators can more clearly understand advisors' priorities and how they view the solutions to advising problems.

*Survey of Advisors and Faculty (Larsen & Brown, 1983).* Unlike the surveys previously discussed, this instrument asks advisors to evaluate their rewards for advising. Rewards are classified as pay, promotion, and tenure evaluation. Advisors respond, using a seven-point agreement scale, to statements such as the following: "Academic advising is adequate at your institution and counts toward merit salary increases." Advisors are also asked who makes reward decisions and how academic advising should be rewarded.

*Advisor/Counselor Questionnaire (Association of Professional Advisors and Counselors, 1978).* This questionnaire includes 23 items on job description information, advisor training and background, supervision, communication, job activities, and the use of advisor information and resources. All questions are answered by checking appropriate responses. Multiple answers may be possible, and so this survey is somewhat complex to score and analyze. However, detailed and potentially useful information is obtained from each question. This survey is particularly suited to assessing and comparing advisors across departments or across institutions.

**Supervisor/Administrator Surveys**

Eight surveys are primarily intended for advising supervisors or administrators; however, some can also be completed by advisors for self-evaluation. These surveys fall into two general areas: advising priorities/trends and advisor behaviors relative to goals.

*Advising Priorities/Trends*

*Survey of Trends in Counseling Center Operations (Aiken, 1980).* This instrument was developed to answer questions about staffing, resource allocation, promotion, and sources of support for counseling centers. The first section of this survey contains 30 items about trends in advising services. Administrators rate the importance of each item on a five-point scale. The second section of this survey requires administrators to respond to questions about funding, budgets, salaries, promotion, student characteristics, and personnel positions. A combination of fill-in, rating scale, and yes or no questions are used in the second section. Space at the end of the survey is left for additional comments. This is a relatively lengthy survey, but would be particularly useful for comparing counseling or advising agendas and goals across institutions.

*Survey of Student Personnel Objectives (McDavis, 1976).* This survey contains two parts. The first part lists 14 advising services, and administrators respond with yes or no answers to whether the services are provided by their center. Questions ask if the center provides services that help students to "understand themselves," "develop their educational and career objectives," "develop leadership and organizational skills," and "develop a system of values." The second part asks whether or not the services, if provided, are actually assisting students in their development. There are also a number of additional statements about student personnel services as a whole. Many of the statements are most appropriate for counseling centers, although the ideas and objectives are similar for advising.

*South Dakota State University Survey Of Advising Priorities (Crockett, 1988).* This survey, consisting of 32 items, asks evaluators to rate how much of a "priority" certain functions are. Statements include, "Be present in office during posted office hours" and "Record a summary statement of each meeting with advisee." This instrument could be used by supervisors or advisors in a self-evaluation format.

*Academic Advising Audit (Crockett, 1988).* Crockett has designed a multi-component Academic Advising Audit for institutions to evaluate the structure and delivery of advising services. The first section is a 37-item questionnaire which assesses the undergraduate advising program. Example questions include, "Does your institution have a written policy statement on academic advising?" and "Does your institution regularly evaluate the overall effectiveness of your advising program?"

Through a self-scoring procedure designed by the author, the responses given in section one are evaluated. A brief explanation of the rationale behind these ratings is given for each question. A third step asks evaluators to place scores of questions into preselected groupings and categories to identify advisement strengths and weaknesses overall. The final section of the audit consists of general recommendations for improving advising programs.

*Advisor Behavior*

*Auburn University Behavior Observation Survey for Student Counseling (Cavender, 1990).* This is a 29-item questionnaire for independent or supervisory raters to indicate on a five-point scale from "almost never" to "almost always" how often they have observed an advisor engaging in certain advising behaviors. For example, raters are asked how frequently an advisor "refers students to appropriate agency for personal and/or non-academic counseling," and "advises and assists students in proper course selection." According to the author of the survey, rater training is necessary to utilize this instrument effectively for performance appraisal.

*University of Ontario Peer Helper Effectiveness Inventory (Russel & Skinkle, 1990).* This is an instrument that supervisors may use to evaluate how helpful peer advisors are to students. Peer advisors give written, open-ended responses to eight scenarios other peer advisors have encountered. Supervisors rate on a five-point scale from low to high effectiveness the peer advisor responses, in terms of situational proactivity and empathy toward students.

*Central State University, Oklahoma, Advising Role and Responsibility Inventory (Crockett, 1988).* This 44-item survey asks supervisors what they think the "functions or responsibilities of the academic advisor should be." For each statement, evaluators circle "P" to indicate that "The advisor has primary responsibility for this function," "S" to indicate that "The advisor shares with others in performing this function, or "N" to indicate that "The advisor has no responsibility for this function." This instrument could also be used for advisor self-evaluation.

*Some Assumptions About Academic Advising (Crockett, 1988).* This questionnaire includes 20 items and asks evaluators how much they agree, on a five-point scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," with statements about campus advising resources. Statements include, "Advisors on our campus are provided adequate information on their advisees," and "The majority of our students would rate academic advising services as good or excellent."

## Discussion

It is clear that a wide variety of advising evaluation instruments is available, but this presents difficulty in deciding which instrument is most appropriate. Either one survey or a combination of surveys could be used to evaluate advising programs, depending on the particular information sought.

Evaluating both individual advisors and advising programs is preferable to isolating either alone, and guidelines for conducting both forms of evaluation have been developed by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA, 1989). According to Ramos (1993), NACADA recommends that individual advisors should be evaluated on their ability to provide information and referral functions as well as to assist students in (a) self-understanding, (b) consideration of life goals, (c) developing educational plans, (d) developing decision-making skills, and (e) evaluation of progress. Advising programs can be evaluated on the basis of (a) mission, (b) advisor selection, (c) orientation and training, (d) communication, (e) reward/recognition of advisors, (f) advising evaluation, (g) needs assessment, (h) delivery systems, (i) support, (j) resources, and (k) access and conduct. An optimum selection of evaluation instruments would assess the entire range of content suggested by NACADA and have acceptable reliability and validity.

Institutional commitment to conducting an evaluation and utilizing results for program improvement is critical to the success of an evaluation effort. Budgets, time, accessibility to and willingness of students, advisors or ad-

ministrators, and other variables peculiar to specific institutions will also play a role in the choice of evaluation tools and methods. Overall, a successful evaluation will need breadth and depth sufficient to reveal advisor and program strengths and weaknesses. Once the institution or the advising center uncovers advising components and methods effective in contributing to positive student development, these methods can be used as a focus for improving the advising system.

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# CHAPTER 17

# Perspectives on Academic Advising for First-Year Students: Present and Future

John N. Gardner

In my capacity as Director of the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina, I have been asked to reflect on academic advising in the present and in the future and specifically how academic advising affects the quality of the first-year experience. Therefore, I offer the readers of this monograph:

- Some predictions about academic advising needs for new students for the balance of the decade.
- What I have learned first-year students want and need in good academic advising relationships.
- The principles which I believe are essential to development of a personal philosophy for those of us who either advise first-year students or supervise others who do.

### The Future of Academic Advising

Academic advising as a profession experienced tremendous growth and change in the 1970s and 1980s, especially after the establishment of the National Academic Advising Association in 1979. Most of this expansion, however, occurred when higher education was also in a growth mode. Since 1989, a significant process of contraction has begun. Despite the reduction in available resources for student services on many campuses, effective academic advising is now more critical than ever for first-year students and will continue to be for the rest of the 1990s. Frequently cited factors such as changing demographics, external pressures impinging on student's choice of major, pressures on cost and length of time to degree completion, curricular complexity, rising cost of attrition, and unfavorable publicity for colleges and universities are going to increase the pressure on institutions to make advising of first-year students more of a priority. Additional factors will compound these trends for "justice for freshmen" (Marchese, 1987). What, then, does the next decade hold for the future of advising?

1. Advising will be assessed more often than in the past because of the overall impact of the assessment movement and the need to

justify requests for increased funds to support advising. A national movement, beginning with a National Conference on Assessment first co-hosted by the American Association for Higher Education and the University of South Carolina and held in Columbia in 1985, set in motion an international movement which some skeptics initially thought would be a "flash in the pan." It is very clear, however, in the middle 1990s, that the pressures for assessment and evaluation of educational outcomes are, in fact, increasing. This is evident in the chorus of increased demands for assessment measures by private, disciplinary, and regional accrediting associations, state governing and coordinating boards, and legislatures. Higher education is clearly not a priority in the middle 1990s due to increased attention that is being paid to such political issues as health care, incarceration costs, the relatively higher priority of kindergarten through high school public education, and because of the post-1994 election tax cutting (and hence revenue cutting) mania sweeping the country. Consequently, in order for advising to be significantly enhanced in the 1990s, proponents of advising will have to be more successful in their competition for declining resources. This means they must be able to demonstrate, through assessment, positive outcomes from enhanced academic advising, particularly if these funds are to be used for new staff positions for professional academic advisors, or the cost of teaching load reductions, or financial incentives and rewards for faculty advising.

2. Students in the 1990s are more vocal in their criticism of colleges that do not provide the quality academic advising these students are entitled to and have paid for. As Astin's and his colleagues' (1994) annual surveys of the values and behaviors of entering college students have demonstrated, they have shown an increased inclination towards social consciousness and the willingness to participate in social action to call attention to their needs and demands. Thus, in the 1990s, students are being asked to pay more and more (when the cost of annual tuition increases has consistently exceeded the annual inflation index), and they justifiably will expect more. In states where the cutbacks have been the severest in public funding for higher education, many members of the public are aware through press reports that these cutbacks have reduced student services and increased advisor-advisee ratios. Certainly the student consumer is increasingly more conscious of the value received for each dollar spent, as are parents. There is no reason to believe that they will expect less from academic advising in the 1990s than they expected in the 1980s.

3. In this decade of cutbacks and austerity which target especially professional student affairs positions, faculty will be doing more advising, not less of it. Increasingly, faculty will be forced to reclaim many of the responsibilities for direct student contact and for support functions which they have gradually been giving up since the 1940s. The most recent national survey of academic advising concludes that approximately 80% of the academic advising in American higher education is still performed by faculty (Habley, 1993). Considering that these faculty have been produced by American research graduate schools where there is essentially no attention paid to teaching, let alone to academic advising, the implications of this finding are significant for the quality of academic advising in the 1990s. In addition, advising loads will be increased due to budget cutbacks. Based on anecdotal reports from the National Conference on The Freshman Year Experience through the mid-1990s, this seems to be a clear trend.

4. As senior faculty retire, more of their positions will be taken by new faculty familiar with the graduate school research model. More effort must therefore be paid to provide new faculty the appropriate training to perform academic advising effectively. Perhaps a model that could be utilized and expanded is the growing use of graduate teaching assistant (TA) training as implemented by such major research institutions as Syracuse University, the University of

Texas, Ohio State University, and the University of South Carolina (Nyquist, Abbott, & Wulff, 1989).

5. As Chapter 3 describes, academic advising for first-year students will be more often connected to the delivery of freshman seminars so that the instructor of the seminar will also be the academic advisor for seminar students. This model of delivering academic advising through the freshman seminar makes possible a number of enhancements over traditional academic advising. First of all, the advisor has regular contact once or twice a week with the student throughout the entire first term. That predictable contact is in the context of a group of students. The course provides a mechanism for the academic advisor-freshman seminar instructor to provide the kind of information which very rarely can be provided in a time- and cost-effective manner in one-on-one advisor-advisee relationships. For example, in this advising model, the institution's catalog can be used as a textbook, and career planning can be integrated into the course as well as delivery of other student support services which are not usually linked so efficiently with academic advising. Two surveys on the current status of freshman seminar programming conducted by the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience & Students in Transition (Barefoot & Fidler,1992; Barefoot, 1995) have shown that an increasing number of colleges and universities are combining academic advising with the freshman seminar model. This structure also has the advantage of linking freshman seminars and academic advising to the disciplines in which first-year students have a primary interest. Thus, the faculty member from the student's major can teach a freshman seminar for students in that major or professional field with advising simultaneously integrated into the context of the course.

6. Advising will be more connected to an early, intrusive career planning process to heighten the probability of a more appropriate major selection earlier in the baccalaureate experience and hopefully to reduce time and costs to degree completion. There are increasing political pressures to reduce these time and cost factors as more state legislators follow the North Carolina model, for example, and impose student fee surcharges and reductions in state appropriations for students who remain longer than the standard number of hours needed to complete an undergraduate degree.

7. Advising will be more computerized as more and more institutions will be able to obtain sophisticated new technology to make many elements of advising more accurate, efficient, and based on good, easily retrievable information. Similarly, due to availability of technology, the Internet, and campus e-mail systems, the computer holds the prospect to change and enhance the frequency, ease, and accessibility of advisor-advisee communication. Faculty-student communication is already increasing due to e-mail, and there is no reason to assume this will not carry over to all other forms of student-educator communication. Also, in the spirit of the growing impact of technological advancement, advisors increasingly will have to be familiar with academic learning opportunities delivered through technology that in many cases is not offered by the home campus. For example, the University of South Carolina currently makes available a complete graduate degree in library science via television for students *beyond* South Carolina in the states of Georgia, West Virginia, and Maine. These myriad opportunities will increase vastly the prerequisite knowledge base for good academic advising.

8. Attitudes toward the legitimacy and merit of helping professions in general may be seriously threatened by the general mean spiritedness and resurrection of social Darwinism evident since the November 1994 elections. If society in general moves to reduce commitment and support at all levels to citizens who are less able, fortunate, or powerful, then there are profound

implications for the status of advising the lowest-status students–those in the first college year. Similarly, if government support for financial aid continues to erode, the cost of mistakes in student decision making and poor advisement will only compound the problems of students' college costs and degree completion. In short, the political changes of the mid 1990s have profound implications for advising in the latter part of the decade.

### What Do First-Year Students Want in an Academic Advising Relationship in the 1990s?

Based upon my observations of first-year students over 30 years as a faculty member and academic advisor, I have found that these students desire that the academic advising relationship be characterized by both caring and competence. A basic expectation of first-year students is that their advisor be available for scheduled appointments and provide them accurate information about curricular offerings, progression to degree, and related career opportunities. But these students also want a relationship with the advisor, not simply a transaction for scheduling. Every first-year student can benefit from a relationship with an advisor who is also willing to serve as a proponent and advocate for the total needs of that student in the institution.

First-year students want and need respect for their dignity and self-worth, and deserve straightforward, honest answers, the assurance of privacy, and the uninterrupted and undivided attention of the advisor. In addition, first-year students appreciate objective, non-judgmental responses from the advisor wherein the focus is on the advisees' strengths, not their weaknesses.

### Principles for Good Practice in Academic Advising for First-Year Students

Several years ago, I was inspired by the direction taken by the National Academic Advising Association in developing a Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising (Appendix A). In many ways, I cannot improve upon this statement. But it can be used as an inspiration for developing a specific set of behavioral principles and objectives for the practice of good academic advising for new students. Readers of this monograph are encouraged to develop, in writing, their own principles of good academic advising for new students, and share them with their students and colleagues. Towards that end, here are my own "Principles for Good Practice in Academic Advising of First-Year Students."

1. Remember, first and foremost, that academic advising is a relationship. It is an end in and of itself, not just a means to an end. Above all, advising does not equal scheduling.

2. Remember that academic advising is teaching, the most powerful form of one-to-one teaching in which you can engage.

3. Show signs of respect for your advisees. Respect that is appropriately conveyed empowers the recipient. Advisors who show respect to their students can illustrate this by (a) giving them undivided attention and lots of eye contact, (b) not taking phone calls in the middle of conversations, and (c) treating them with the same respect as any other person for whom they work. Nothing shows respect more than letting a student know he or she matters to you. One way to do this is to keep good notes on your advisees, and before each scheduled session with one of your regular advisees, review those notes so that at the opening of the session, you can bring up one point that you discussed at the last meeting. Showing you remember the student is very affirming.

4. Practice active listening. Listening is also affirming and lets the speaker know he or she is significant to you. The act of listening includes looking at the advisee, having your body face his or hers, using open body language with arms extended away from your body towards the other party, and letting the other person know you have heard them by periodic rephrasing, paraphrasing, and summarizing. Let the advisee know he or she has been heard.

5. Know when you are over your head in dealing with an advisee's problem and refer as necessary to other qualified professionals on your campus. Referring doesn't indicate any weakness on your part or lack of knowledge; it is the professionally responsible thing to do. Also, in this age of liability concern and litigation, this only makes good sense professionally for you and your institution.

6. Give accurate information. If you don't know the answer, say so. Either send the student to someone who does know the answer or make a commitment to get the information yourself. When in doubt, refer.

7. Be generous, flexible, and varied with your published office hours. Above all, be available during your office hours and at the times you have made appointments. Students need to know you are predictable and reliable. Some students may have very few people in their lives they can trust. Predictability encourages the development of trust. In turn, trust enhances learning and respect of the advisee towards you and, by implication, towards other college educators.

8. Remember that what really counts is what is best for the student, not necessarily what is best for your department or institution. For example, although it might be preferable from the perspective of a department or institution for a student to remain enrolled, it may not be in the best interest of the student. The advisee must come first.

9. Make positive predictions of your students. Students are like other human beings who will work hard to fulfill the predictions a significant person in their lives makes of them.

10. Give careful consideration to the arrangement of your office furniture and the environment where you conduct your advisement sessions. Don't make your desk a physical barrier between you and the student. Have as much open space as possible between you and the advisee when you are conversing so that you have symbolically removed barriers to communication.

11. Be careful when advisees come seeking advice as opposed to information. Advice should come last from you. Prior to that, listen to the students, then validate and confirm what they say as appropriate. Make suggestions to them, and provide information for alternatives from which to choose. Make referrals. Above all, avoid making decisions for your advisees even when they may request or intimate that is what they would like you to do. Remember the old maxim of transactional analysis: "Rescuers are victims." Remember that the goal is for them to become more independent and less dependent on you.

12. Urge your advisees to use additional student support services. Students who avail themselves of campus resources have higher retention rates. If necessary, make your advisees an appointment to use one of these services and escort them to that particular office. Show them the way, set things up, and help them take the first step.

13. Urge your advisees to join a group and to spend more time on campus. Joiners are stayers.

14. Urge your students to take advantage of all opportunities for extended orientation, including especially an orientation seminar course, if one is available. Students who participate in orientation courses have higher retention and graduation rates than students who do not.

15. Link your own process of good academic advising with an intrusive career planning process. Do it early. See that your students get career planning during the first term of college prior to the time period when they go through academic advisement to select courses for the second term. Strongly urge your advisees to obtain occupational testing and to use all the other services such a career center would provide.

16. Use your power wisely. Remember that in your role as an effective academic advisor, you are exercising enormous power. You can have a profoundly positive influence on your student's selection of courses, majors, degrees, options, careers, and ways of life, just as someone had on yours.

**Linking the Advising of First-Year Students to Their Future After College**

As the national movement to enhance the first-year experience has unfolded and developed in the 1980s and into the middle 1990s, it has given rise to a new and parallel movement to increase the attention paid to graduating students. This phenomenon has come to be known as The Senior Year Experience. Increasing attention is being paid to the kinds of services and support institutions provide for seniors, including academic advising and career planning.

Perhaps even more generic than looking at students in the first year and/or the senior year is to see our role as advisors for students in transition, period. As of the writing of this chapter, we have redesignated our Center as The National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience *and Students in Transition.* We are in the process of refocusing our work on the more generic notion of students in transition, any kind of critical life transition during the college years, but especially the first-year transition, the *transfer* student experience, and the senior year experience. This means, in part, that we are redefining what is generic and what is unique in the transition experiences of the various types of "new" students. Certainly all of this has implications for us as advisors who see our institutions as instruments to support, most fundamentally, student *transition.*

As I look towards the future of academic advising, I link it to what I think our institutions must increasingly do: intentionally produce the kinds of graduates society needs and demands. In that spirit, I would urge my colleagues in higher education who are involved in academic advising to use their roles as advisors to help students not only take the "right" courses but also help them develop the critical skills sought by employers of college graduates. These skills include:

- Public speaking
- Effective writing
- Numeracy
- Interpersonal communication
- Listening
- Critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Ethical decision making
- Time management
- Use of technology, especially personal computers
- Goal setting
- Ability to work with others as part of a work team
- Collaboration and negotiation skills
- Prior successful work experience
- Understanding of how bureaucracies work
- Knowledge and practice of organizational communication
- Prior experience in dealing with diversity and multiculturalism
- Speaking and writing ability in a second language
- Desire and ability to learn

I believe that one of our charges as we think through the continuous enhancement of advising services for first-year and all other new students must be to help them to begin to think about how they might view the college experience as a

preparatory process for the development of the aforementioned skills.

It has been with great excitement and respect that I have watched the growth and professionalization of academic advising in the United States since 1977 when the first national gathering on the topic of academic advising was convened in Burlington, Vermont. It is in that spirit of great respect and appreciation that this monograph has been organized and in which I have offered those thoughts from my own personal perspective on the importance and principles of effective academic advising for first-year students. There is no question in my mind that good advising for first-year students will be more necessary than ever in the immediate and extended higher education future. Now all we have to do is to accomplish that. This monograph points the way.

No matter what our level of resources may be, higher education will set its priorities in line with what it, not necessarily the larger society, most values. The final question is this: Do we value highly enough effective academic advisement of first-year students to achieve the blueprint laid out in this monograph?

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# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A

# Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising

## National Academic Advising Association

### Introduction

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) is an organization of professional advisors, faculty, administrators, students and others from a variety of settings who do academic advising or otherwise work to promote quality academic advising on college and university campuses. As members of this organization or of the profession of academic advising, or as others who advise or provide related programs and services to students, we must recognize our responsibility not only to students and the institutions in which our advising is done, but to society, to colleagues, and to ourselves.

While not all those who do academic advising are professional advisors, anyone carrying out advising functions should be expected to perform in a professional manner. The Core Values identified and discussed here provide a framework against which those who advise can measure their own performance.

In no way does this Core Values statement try to dictate that all academic advising needs to be done in precisely the same way by everyone, or that there is one particular advising philosophy or model. Instead these are reference points for professionals to use. Furthermore, the Core Values do not carry equal weight. Advisors will find some Core Values more important than others, depending on their own philosophies and those of their colleges or universities.

*The Power of Academic Advising*

Few experiences in students' postsecondary career have as much potential for influencing their development as does academic advising.

Through regular contact with students–whether face-to-face, through the mail, on the telephone, or through computer mediated systems–advisors gain meaningful insights into students' academic, social, and personal experiences and needs.

Advisors use these insights to help students feel a part of the academic community, develop sound academic and career goals, and ultimately be successful learners.


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Because of the nature of academic advising, advisors often develop a broad vision of the institution. Advisors can therefore play an important interpretive role with administrators, faculty, and staff, helping them further understand students academic and personal development needs. Advisors can teach others to identify students who, with additional attention from academic support staff, may achieve their goals to succeed academically and personally.

Students place a great deal of trust in their advisors. That trust warrants quality programs and services. It is through our Core Values that students' expectations of academic advising are honored.

*Beliefs about Students*

Like other educators, academic advisors work to strengthen the importance, dignity, potential, and unique nature of each individual served within the academic setting. Our work as advisors is guided by our beliefs that:

- Students can be responsible for their own behavior.
- Students can be successful as a result of their individual goals and efforts.
- Students have a desire to learn.
- Learning needs vary according to individual skills, goals, and experiences.
- Students hold their own beliefs and opinions.

*Why Our Core Values Are Important*

Out of these beliefs grow our Core Values. Regardless of our professional preparation and experience, each of us in the field of academic advising is ultimately guided in our work by what we perceive as important, what we value, and what we believe about those we serve–primarily students, but also others in the institutions within which we work, and even the institutions themselves.

We recognize the complex nature of academic advising, the wide variety of settings and tasks for which academic advisors are responsible, and the diverse backgrounds and experiences of academic advisors. Yet while values and beliefs are by their very nature individual, there are many that are subscribed to by those who advise students. Through this Statement of Core Values we communicate to others what they can expect from us. These Core Values may be used to validate our conduct in our diverse roles and our relationships within the academic community.

**The Core Values**

Students deserve dependable, accurate, respectful, honest, friendly, and professional service. In order to serve students well, academic advisors understand that they are responsible to many constituents who comprise our academic communities. This is the foundation on which the following Core Values rest.

*Advisors are responsible to the students and individuals they serve.* The cooperative efforts of all who advise help to deliver quality programs and services to students. These include, but are not limited to, giving accurate and timely information, maintaining regular office hours, and keeping appointments.

Advisors help students develop a perception of themselves and their relationship to the future. Advisors introduce students in a nurturing way to the world they are entering–teaching them to value the learning process, put the college experience into perspective, become more responsible, set priorities and evaluate sequences of events, and be honest with themselves,

Advisors encourage self-reliance by helping students make informed and responsible decisions, set realistic goals, and develop thinking, learning, and life management skills to meet present and future needs. Advisors work with students to help them accomplish the goals and objectives they have established for themselves. Advisors encourage students to be responsible for their own success and progress. They respect students' rights to their individual beliefs and opinions but are not dictated to by them.

Advisors work to modify barriers to student progress; identify burdensome, ineffective, and inefficient policies and procedures; and work to effect change. When the needs of students and the institution are in conflict, advisors seek a resolution that is in the best interest of both parties. Advisors inform students about appropriate grievance procedures in cases where students find the resolution unsatisfactory.

Advisors recognize the changing nature of the college and university environment and student body. They support students in appropriate ways (e.g., advocate at the administrative level for recognition of these changes; offer varied office hours; and acknowledge the special needs of all students and the pressures on them to juggle study with work, family, and other interpersonal demands).

Advisors are knowledgeable about and sensitive to federal, state, and their own institution's policies and procedures, especially those governing such matters as sexual harassment, personal relationships with students, privacy of student information, equal treatment, equal access, and equal opportunity.

Advisors respect the rights of students to have information about themselves kept confidential. Advisors share information with others about students and their programs only when both advisor and student believe that information is relevant and will result in increased information or assistance, assessment, and provision of appropriate services to the student.

Advisors gain access to and use computerized information about students only when that information is relevant to the advising they are doing with that particular student. Advisors enter or change information on students' records only when legitimately authorized to do so.

Advisors need to document advising contacts adequately to aid subsequent advising interactions.

*Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process.* Effective advising requires a broad-based, or holistic, approach to working with students. Academic advisors develop crucial ties with others who assist students in diverse areas, such as admissions, orientation, financial aid, housing, health services, athletics, course selection and satisfaction of academic requirements, special physical and educational needs (e.g., disabilities, study skills, psychological counseling), foreign study, career development, co-curricular programs, and graduation clearance).

Advisors are facilitators and mediators. Responsible academic advisors recognize their limitations and use their specialized knowledge effectively.

To make connections between academic advising and other aspects of students' lives, advisors seek out resources provided by others. Referrals to these resources provide students with further assessments of their needs and access to appropriate programs and services. With others, advisors are responsible for helping students integrate the information they are confronted with and for helping students make well-informed academic decisions.

If peer advisors are used, the supervising advisor will closely monitor the peer advisor regarding adherence to appropriate policies and practices.

*Advisors are responsible to the college or university in which they work.* Advisors respect the opinions of their colleagues; remain neutral when students present them with comments, questions, or opinions about other faculty or staff; and are nonjudgmental about academic programs.

Advisors increase their collective professional strength by sharing their philosophies and techniques with colleagues.

Advisors keep administrators who are not involved directly in the advising process informed and aware of the importance of academic advising in students' lives, and of the need for administrative support of advising and related activities.

Advisors abide by the specific policies, procedures, and values of the department and institution for which they work. Where injustices

occur and might interfere with students' learning, advisors advocate for change on behalf of students with the institution's administration, faculty, and staff.

*Advisors are responsible to higher education generally.* Academic advisors honor (and are protected by) the concept of academic freedom as practiced on our campuses. In this spirit, advisors hold a variety of points of view. Academic advisors are free to base their work with students on the most appropriate and optimum theories of college student development and models of delivery for academic advising programs and services.

Advisors accept that one of the goals of education is to introduce students to the world of ideas. One goal of academic advising is to establish a partnership between student and advisor to guide students through their academic programs so they may attain the knowledge gained and offered by faculty.

Academic advisors believe that it is ultimately the responsibility of students to apply what they learn to everyday situations. Advisors help students in understanding this process.

Advisors advocate for students' educational achievement at the highest attainable standard and support student goals, as well as the educational mission of the institution.

Advisors advocate the creation or strengthening of programs and services that are compatible with students' academic needs.

*Advisors are responsible to the community (including the local community, state, and region in which the institution is located).* Academic advisors interpret the institution's mission, standards, goals, and values to its community, including public and private schools from which the college or university draws its student body. Likewise, advisors understand their student body and regularly inform the schools from which their students come about appropriate preparation so that students may perform successfully in higher education.

Advisors are sensitive to the values and mores of the surrounding community, sharing these with and interpreting them to students. Advisors are aware of community programs and services and may become models for students by participating in community activities themselves.

*Advisors are responsible to their professional role as advisors and to themselves personally.* To keep advising skills honed and interest high, advisors are encouraged to seek opportunities for professional development through classes, workshops, conferences, reading, consultation with others, and interaction in formal groups with other advisors.

Advisors understand the demands on themselves that emerge from the service nature of the work they do. Advisors develop skills for taking care of themselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually. They learn how to detach themselves from students' problems while maintaining a keen listening ear and providing sensitive responses. They establish and maintain appropriate boundaries. They need to be nurtured by others within the profession, and they need to nurture their colleagues. They seek support for themselves within and outside the institution.

Academic advising lends itself well to research. Advisors may engage in research related to advising, and are encouraged to engage in research related to their own particular training and disciplinary backgrounds. Each research agenda must honor the institution's safeguards for privacy and humane treatment of subjects.

Academic advisors frequently seek guidance regarding ethical decisions and behaviors in their work with students. This statement is provided as a guide for appropriate conduct. The Core Values should be reviewed periodically, adding relevant material and rewording existing language to bring the statement in line with current professional practices and thinking. The National Academic Advising Association encourages institutions to adopt this Statement of Core Values, to embrace its principles, and to support the work of those who do academic advising.



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# APPENDIX B

# A Taxonomy of Advising Services for the First-Year Student

**Pre-entry: Acquire Accurate Expectations**

1. *Prepare for entry into an academic major discipline.*

   Provide new students with information on courses of study and descriptions. Establish communication with new students and give assistance in deciding on an academic discipline. Involve faculty from academic departments with new students. Assist in clarifying students' academic goals.

2. *Become familiar with college requirements, course contents, and terminology (for example, credit hours, sections, building abbreviations).*

   Ensure that new students receive the general catalogue and relevant advisement information. Provide walk-in and telephone assistance.

3. *Complete initial registration.*

   Ensure that new students have received a class schedule, registration instructions, and a recommended first-semester schedule. Conduct registration assistance on or off campus.

4. *Learn how to adjust class schedule before semester begins.*

   Provide add/drop instructions with course confirmation.

5. *Learn about financial aid options and policies for acquiring and maintaining financial aid.*

   Provide walk-in and telephone assistance with advising office and financial aid office. Mail information on grants, loans, and scholarships. Be familiar with campus financial aid programs. Make students aware of available assistance; refer them to appropriate offices.

**The First Year: Become Familiar With Academic Life**

1. *Become familiar with university resources.*

   Provide information on advisement programs and university resources. Conduct new student orientation and introduce students to campus resources. Develop handbook of related materials.

2. *Become acquainted with the university's academic leaders (faculty, department chairs, deans, etc.).*


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Involve faculty in new-student orientation. Assign faculty advisors to meet with new students during orientation. Establish faculty-student orientation seminars.

3. *Learn how to adjust class schedule after semester has begun.*

   During orientation, acquaint first-year students with advisement and registration offices, and the general catalogue. Provide class adjustment assistance.

4. *Understand university and major requirements:*
   - ❖ General education
   - ❖ Credit hours
   - ❖ Residence
   - ❖ Major courses
   - ❖ Prerequisites for admissions to college or major

   Computerize academic requirements and mail them regularly to students. Provide walk-in advising services, seminars during new-student orientation, and referrals to faculty advisors. Maintain academic records for students.

5. *Understand university policies and academic options:*
   - ❖ Academic warning and probation
   - ❖ Changing majors
   - ❖ Challenging classes
   - ❖ Advanced placement credit
   - ❖ Transfer credit
   - ❖ Independent study credit
   - ❖ Study abroad
   - ❖ Honors courses

   Maintain up-to-date academic information. Disseminate information to students during orientation and through brochures, walk-in advising, and mailings.

6. *Develop accurate expectations of time and effort required to make successful academic progress:*
   - ❖ Time management
   - ❖ Study skills and habits

   Develop related seminars during the year. Provide general studies program. Regularly monitor student academic progress and make appropriate referrals.

7. *Evaluate whether major and career choices match interests and abilities:*
   - ❖ Identify interests
   - ❖ Assess abilities
   - ❖ Explore major/career options

   Help students crystallize major choice and work closely with career counselors to assess interest and ability. Help students obtain appropriate career counseling. Develop related seminars and refer students appropriately.

8. *Assume responsibility for educational program.*

   Provide accurate academic information and be available to support students in their ability to succeed.

9. *Learn how to associate with professors in and out of class.*

   Integrate faculty into advising program. Encourage and establish regular advising with faculty and departmental contacts.

*Note.* From "Developmental Advising: A Taxonomy of Services," by G. L. Kramer, B. Chynoweth, J. Jensen, & L. Taylor, 1987, *NASPA Journal, 24,* pp. 23-31.

# APPENDIX C

# Academic Advising for First-Year Students: An Annotated Bibliography

George E. Steele

Like many academic advisors, I like to have things at my finger tips. Probably this is due to the fact that my office has so many piles of materials scattered about it that I now refer to them affectionately as "decor." I label the different periods of decor as early, middle, and late academic. A few of my period pieces I have not seen in a while; they are blocked by other later acquisitions. If what I am looking for is not at my finger tips, well then it is truly out of reach. This arrangement usually works fine, but it does have one major drawback. Often when I go searching for a particular item, I start going through the piles and uncover some very interesting things. But then I forget what I was initially searching for. When this happens, I then experience the situation of having my search frustrated by it being out of my reach and out of my mind.

I share this personally peculiar and unflattering information with you as a way of expressing my motivation for organizing this appendix. The availability of resources related to academic advising for first-year students is overwhelming and constantly expanding. The attempt to impose some type of order on it is imperative for both professional maintenance, growth, and sanity.

To move towards this goal, annotated bibliographies and resources are presented in this appendix, providing easy access to information related to academic advising for first-year students. This appendix will present five sections of annotated bibliographies or resources: (a) selected annotated bibliographies of publications addressing advising issues related to special populations of students, (b) selected annotated bibliographies of publications related to academic advising in its institutional context, (c) a list of outstanding orientation programs, (d) a list of materials and publications that address specific academic advising practices, (e) and a list of professional academic and student affairs organizations within higher education.

In selecting the items in this appendix, the goal was to provide resources that would appeal to a professional interests of practitioners, administrators, and researchers. For many, these form the broad range of professional interests we have and must embrace while advising. In the

sections that follow, each of the five categories will be introduced with a brief description.

This compilation of resources was completed with the assistance of many of the authors in this monograph. Laura Confer, Elizabeth Creamer, Susan Frost, Virginia Gordon, Derrell Hart, Cheryl Polson, Carol Ryan, Milton Spann, and Nancy Spann assisted with the selection and writing of the annotated bibliographies in the first section, "Advising Special Populations." Likewise, John Gardner, Wesley Habley, Gary Kramer, Erlend Peterson, John Tanner, and Lee Upcraft assisted with the selection and writing of the annotated bibliographies in the second section, "Academic Advising and Its Institutional Context." All of these authors contributed annotations for the chapters that correspond to the chapters they wrote for this monograph. Of special note, this author would like to thank Bonnie Titley and Hal Caldwell for their assistance with the information pertaining to computer newsgroups.

## Advising Special Populations

This section is comprised of annotated bibliographies of publications related to advising adult students, African-American students, Asian-American students, Hispanic-American students, Native-American students, student athletes, students with learning disabilities, undecided students, and underprepared students.

### *Adult Students*

Chickering, A. W. (Ed.). (1981). *The modern American college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This book offers readers a comprehensive view of how higher education can address the life cycle concerns of a diverse student population. Section One, which addresses the needs of today's students, is followed by a section which examines the implications for curricular development in 14 disciplines. A final section reviews the consequences for teaching, student services, and administration.

Kasworn, C. E. (1990). Adult undergraduates in higher education: A review of past research perspectives. *Review of Educational Research, 60*, 345-372.

The author provides a meta-analysis of past research on adult undergraduates, pointing out the contradictory assumptions researchers have brought to their work and reframing some of the questions investigators should pursue in future research.

Schlossberg, N. K., Lynch, A. Q., & Chickering, A. W. (1989). *Improving higher education environments for adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Chapters 3 and 4 are particularly helpful to advisors interested in learning more about reasons why adults come to our institutions and how they cope when they get there. Other chapters include suggestions for adaptation or improvement of services for this growing student population. An overview of adult development is provided.

### *African-American Students*

Atkinson, D. R. (1987). Counseling Blacks: a review of relevant research. *Journal of College Student Personnel, 28*, 552-558.

This study uses historical and contemporary perspectives to examine the Black experience. Theoretical articles and empirical research on counseling Blacks are reviewed. Issues related to racially mixed counseling, and counseling theories and techniques are discussed.

Bynum, A. S. (1991). *Black students/White counselor: Developing effective relationships* (2nd ed.). Indianapolis, IN: Alexandria Books, Inc.

This book illustrates how White counselors can enhance their relationships with Black clients based on knowledge of the historical background and culture of African Americans. To this end, the author provides specific strategies and techniques based on a holistic approach that recognizes all aspects of students' lives, including the influence of special family ties and the impact of Black culture and tradition. The appendices present a bibliography, a Black history/life

reading list, a community resource list, and a holistic process for academic counseling.

Daughtry, L. M. (1992). *The development of a freshman orientation course for African-American students with a focus on Afrocentricity.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 347 259)

This article describes the creation of a one-credit freshman orientation course on Afrocentricity which addresses the needs of African-American students at Beaver College in Glenside, PA. Presented are the goals of the course, the ideas behind the creation of the curriculum, and a discussion of the development of the course. An appendix contains the course syllabus.

Elam, J. C. (Ed.). (1989). *Blacks in higher education: Overcoming the odds.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Three significant issues relevant to Blacks in higher education are focused upon in this volume: the continuation of the Black family, the decline in numbers of Blacks with doctoral degrees, and Black students on predominantly White university and college campuses. Specific topics such as recruitment and retention of minority students in urban areas and the impact of mentors on Black students at predominantly White institutions are addressed in the essays. Several models and programs are examined related to both student and faculty issues. Practical and insightful recommendations are offered for many of the specific problems.

Nettles, M. T., & T oeny, A. R. (Eds.). (1988). *Toward Black undergraduate student equality in American higher education.* New York: Greenwood Press.

This book focuses on issues of equality in higher education for Black students. The beginning chapters detail current barriers to Black student equality. The following chapters cover various topics including economic considerations for Black students, the leadership role higher education could assume in increasing Black representation in the scientific areas, the basis for the federal and state governments' role for achieving Black undergraduate equality, the basis for private sector and non-governmental group involvement in higher education equality, and strategies for making educational access an equitable one.

Sedlacek, W. E. (1987). Black students on White campuses: 20 years of research. *Journal of College Student Personnel, 28,* 484-495.

This article examines the student affairs research on Black undergrad ıate students at White institutions between the years 1967 and 1987. The literature is organized and discussed in terms of eight noncognitive variables affecting Black student life. Recommendations for action by student affairs professionals are presented.

Ward, W. E., & Cross, M. M. (Eds.). (1989). *Key issues in minority education: Research directions and practical implications.* Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, Center for Research on Minority Education.

This book is based on four major themes: (a) legal aspects of access for minorities, (b) access and retention of minority faculty and staff, (c) access and retention of minority graduate students, and (d) the role of standardized testing in the admission of minority students. Chapters are organized related to these themes. The individual chapters present research and provide suggestions for improvement.

*Asian-American Students*

Asian and Pacific Americans: Behind the myths. (1989). *Change, 22,* 12-63.

This special edition focuses upon Asian Americans and higher education. Articles trace the changing image of Asian Americans and relevant implications, summarize the demographic backgrounds of the largest Asian-American ethnic groups, and present interviews with six Asian-American students attending six diverse colleges and universities.

Chew, C. A., & Ogi, A. Y. (1987). Asian-American college student perspectives. In D. J. Wright (Ed.), *Responding to the needs of today's*

*minority students* (New Directions for Student Services, No. 38). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This chapter discusses the learning, social, and emotional needs of Asian-American college students. Several strategies for developing programs and services for student affairs are recommended.

Hartman, J. S., & Askounis, A. C. (1989). Asian-American students: Are they really a "model minority"? *School Counselor, 37,* 85-88.

This article reviews literature on Asian-American students, concluding that effective counseling for this population must include knowledge and recognition of their unique cultural background. Counseling techniques adapted to students from an Asian heritage are discussed.

Zhang, S. Y., & Carrasquillo, A. L. (1991). *Annotated bibliography on the education of Chinese students in the United States: 1970-1990.* Bronx, NY: Fordham University, Graduate School of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 347 219)

This annotated bibliography, which covers materials from 1970 through 1990, is grouped into four parts: (a) Early Childhood Education, (b) Elementary and Secondary Education, (c) College Education, and (d) General Information on Chinese Students. In all, there are 80 citations and descriptive annotations of journal articles, conference reports, and other research reports.

*Hispanic-American Students*

Puente, T., & Diaz, C. (1992). Special report: Hispanic on campus. *Hispanic,* 29-40.

This edition describes the Hispanic college experience by presenting brief personal accounts to emphasize opportunities for Hispanics in higher education. Issues as diverse as Hispanic fraternities and sororities and career choices are addressed.

Sanchez, J. (1992). Dropping out: Hispanic students, attrition, and the family. *College and University, 67,* 145-50.

In this study, a survey of Hispanic-American students leaving college found significant differences between dropouts and those dismissed for academic performance. It was found that the influence of familial values and demands and other extra-academic variables exerted considerable pressure on individual students. Suggestions for more holistic approaches are offered to challenge institutional assumptions about retention of Hispanic students.

Schwartz, H. S., & Landers, F. (1989). Retention programs for Hispanic students. *School of Education Review, 1,* 55-59.

This article presents two holistic approaches to help counter the declining college enrollment and graduation of Hispanic students. Two retention programs are described: Valued Youth Partnership, a remedial and dropout prevention program; and Step-to-College, which helps Hispanic students make the transition from high school to college.

*Multicultural Advising*

Haro, R. (1992). Lessons from practice: What not to do. *Change, 24,* 54-58.

This article presents four case studies of failed efforts to increase diversity on college campuses. Summarizing the results of these efforts the author concludes these examples demonstrate the need to gain commitment of faculty and staff, the need for administrative leadership to take risks, the need to find constructive ways to resolve differences, and the need to anticipate consequences of minority recruitment policies.

Samuda, R. J., & Wolfgang, A. (Eds.). (1985). *Intercultural counseling and assessment: Global perspectives.* Lewiston, NY: C. J. Hogrefe Publishers.

This book demonstrates the need for more appropriate intercultural counseling in counselor training through 23 different global perspectives presented within each of its chapters.

Vacc, N. A. (Ed.). (1988). *Experiencing and counseling multicultural and diverse populations*



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(2nd ed.). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 345 127)

This book presents an overview of 12 diverse populations to expose practitioners to the unique and genuine characteristics of subgroups within the United States. The book offers suggestions to assist practitioners as they work with clients and/or students from these populations. Some of the subgroups addressed include: older order Amish, gays and lesbians, single parents, women entering or re-entering the workplace, and individuals with a physical disability. Most chapters begin with an awareness index about the addressed sub-group. Each chapter concludes with its own set of references.

Wright, D. J. (Ed.). (1987). *Responding to the needs of today's minority students* (New Directions for Student Services, No. 38). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This source book offers background considerations and suggestions for developing programs and services to enhance the recruitment and retention of minority students. The first chapter reviews the history of minority student involvement in higher education. The following chapters focus on White-minority peer interaction, the changing needs of Black students, and the special needs of Asian-American, American-Indian, and Hispanic students.

*Native-American Students*

American-Indian voices in higher education. (1991). *Change, 23,* 4-46.

This special report features the Native-American student in higher education. Topics of the various articles in this edition include a review of the history of cultural conflict, the Native-American student in the college curriculum, a model of a college intervention program, a look at Indian education in Minnesota, ways of empowering the students, and educating to Americanize.

Herring, R. D. (1990). Attacking career myths among Native Americans: Implications for counseling. *School Counselor, 38,* 13-18.

This article focuses on the need to acknowledge and address career myths among Native-American students. Factors influencing these career myths are discussed. The author suggests basic implications and strategies for counseling.

Hutchinson, R. J. (1992). *An annotated bibliography of journal articles on the subject of Native-American students with special needs, 1985-1992.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 352 760)

This compilation of annotated sources provides a comprehensive list of recently written journal articles relating to the subject of Native Americans. Conclusions are drawn about the state of the literature in each of the seven bibliography areas, and suggestions for future research are offered. An appendix lists descriptors used in an Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) search on this subject.

*Student-Athletes*

Gordon, R. L. (1986). Issues in advising student-athletes. *NACADA Journal, 6,* 81-86.

In this article, four issues involving the student-athlete are identified as important to academic advising: the relationship between athletic participation and academic performance, individual differences among student-athletes, possible conflicts in the roles of student and athlete, and the debate over the need for special programs for student-athletes.

Grites, T. J., & James, G. L. (1986). Division III—another ball game. *NACADA Journal, 6,* 23-26.

This article examines the differences and similarities between the non-scholarship athletes of Division III and the scholarship athlete. Specific suggestions to improve the quality of life for the Division III student-athletes are proposed.

Roper, L. D., & McKenzie, A. (1988). Academic advising: A developmental model for Black student-athletes. *NASPA Journal, 26,* 91-98.

This article presents a model for a comprehensive developmental approach to advising Black college athletes which relies on five growth dimensions: symbolization, alocentrism, integration, stability, and autonomy. This model assumes that the dimensions of development are all interdependent and must be balanced in order for an athlete to grow in a well-rounded way.

*Students with Learning Disabilities*

Adams, M. C., & Crews, W. B. (1991). Teaching strategies in introductory sociology for college students with learning disabilities. *Teaching Sociology, 19,* 42-47.

This article focuses on teaching techniques proven effective in reaching learning-disabled students enrolled in introductory sociology courses. Specific strategies and instructional interventions for effective teaching are described.

Barr, V. (1993). *Foreign language requirements and students with learning disabilities* (ERIC Digest). Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 355 834)

This digest discusses the problems surrounding foreign language requirements for students with learning disabilities at colleges and universities. Colleges and universities are not required to waive foreign language requirements for students with learning disabilities, according to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The digest focuses on alternative solutions and approaches when working with these students. A program designed for teaching Latin to learning disabled students is described as well as information on a conference that focuses on foreign language learning and learning disabilities.

Hughes, C. A., & Smith, J. O. (1990). Cognitive and academic performance of college students with learning disabilities: A synthesis of the literature. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 13,* 66-79.

This article reviews 26 articles including information about the cognitive and academic characteristics of learning-disabled college students. Topics focused upon are levels of intellectual functioning, reading achievement, mathematics achievement, written expression, and foreign language performance. The implications for service provisions are discussed.

Martin, J. L. (1991). Removing the stumbling blocks: 25 ways to help our learning disabled college writers. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College, 18,* 283-289.

This article makes 25 suggestions to help alleviate some of the problems that learning disabled students face in writing.

Scott, S. S. (1991). A change in legal status: An overlooked dimension in the transition to higher education. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 24,* 459-466.

This paper examines learning-disabled students' change in legal status as they leave high school, which is structured by Public Law 94-142, and enter college settings which are structured by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The paper discusses implications of the change, transition programs, and guidelines for developing legal transition skills.

*Undecided Students*

Gordon, V. N. (Ed.). (1994). *Issues in advising the undecided college student* (Monograph No. 15). Columbia, SC: National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.

This monograph contains many perspectives on the student who enters college undecided about an educational and/or vocational direction. The authors contributing to this monograph have a great deal of experience working with undecided students. Chapters include an update on the research literature on this special population, administrative approaches, a developmental model for advising them, career implications, and advising approaches for special undecided students such as honors, minority, disabled students, major-changers, and community college students. Other chapters offer suggestions for

training academic advisors who work with this special group and discussions of special advising techniques, including freshman seminar courses designed for undecided students. Chapters on evaluation, assessment, and exemplary advising programs complete this comprehensive monograph.

Gordon, V. N. (1995). *The undecided college student: An academic and career advising challenge* (2nd ed.). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

The way that academic advisors, counselors, faculty, and administrators can help undecided college students set and implement educational and career goals is described. The focus is a developmental advising approach which incorporates career development concepts. Origins of indecision, categories of undecided students, and model programs for advising them are considered, with attention to program components, delivery systems, administrative concerns, individual and group advising techniques, advisor techniques and training, and program evaluation.

Gordon, V. N. (1981). The undecided student: A developmental perspective. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 59,* 433-439.

Student indecision regarding careers and college majors has been the focus of research studies for many years. Yet these studies have indicated few significant differences between undecided and decided students. This article discusses undecided students as normal, growing, predictable individuals in various stages of vocational and cognitive development. It also discusses the use of developmental concepts in academic advising, career counseling, and teaching.

*Underprepared Students*

Saunders, S. A., & Ervin, L. (1984). Meeting the special advising needs of students. In R. B. Winston Jr., T. K. Miller, S. C. Ender, & T. J. Grites (Eds.), *Developmental academic advising* (pp. 250-286). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This chapter describes trends towards student diversity in our nation's colleges and universities and focuses on the specific needs of several undergraduate sub-populations, including the underprepared entering student. Also included is a table outlining the particular problems or challenges faced by the advisor, the populations associated with the problem or need, and four areas of concern for advisors: academic competence, personal-social development, education and career planning, and advisor competencies.

Spann, M. G., & McCrimmon, S. (1994). Remedial/developmental education: Past, present, and future. In G.A. Baker III (Ed.), *A handbook on the community college in America: Its history, mission, and management* (pp. 161-175). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

This book chapter reviews the community college response to the needs of the academically underprepared students including the historical treatment of these students within senior and community colleges, the historical causes of poor academic performance, the characteristics of underprepared college students, the level of developmental/remedial activity within community colleges, and recommendations for reducing the demand for remedial/developmental activity.

Walter, L. M. (1982). Lifeline to the underprepared: Successful academic advising. *Improving University and College Teaching, 30*(4), 159-163.

The author attempts to answer four salient questions about underprepared college students: (a) Who are they? (b) Why do we have underprepared students in college? (c) For what are they underprepared? (d) What can be done to assist them? After answering these questions, he provides a list of seven specific actions that the successful advisor should take. He also frames seven questions advisors can ask to test whether or not they have the perspective and state of mind necessary for effective advising.

### Academic Advising and Its Institutional Context

This section is comprised of annotated bibliographies of publications that help place academic advising in its institutional context. The section is

organized in the following categories: assessment and evaluation; first-year students; learning communities; organization of academic advising; training, rewarding, and recognizing faculty advisors; and the undergraduate experience.

*Assessment and Evaluation*

Astin, A. W. (1993). Implications for educational theory and practice. In *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited* (pp. 396-437). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The aim of Astin's work is to provide a better empirical and theoretical basis for faculty and others to improve higher education effectiveness. In this chapter, Astin discusses how students change during college and the influences that students find important. One conclusion is that next to peer groups, faculty represent the most significant aspect of an undergraduate's development. Astin's discussion is compelling because it includes a discussion of research findings and implications.

Chickering, A. W., & Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and identity* (2nd. ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The first edition of this book (published in 1969) advanced the thesis that colleges and universities should be concerned with fostering student self-esteem, healthy relationships, and socially responsible behavior. This edition presents new findings for the last 25 years and provides a current theoretical context for student development. Part I examines each of seven vectors of general development towards individuation: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy towards interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Part II discusses each of the eight key influences on student development: clear and consistent institutional objectives, institutional size, student-faculty relationships, curriculum, teaching, friendships and student communities, student development programs and services, and powerful educational environments.

Crookston, B. B. (1972). A developmental view of academic advising as teaching. *Journal of College Student Personnel, 13,* 12-17.

In this brief classic, Crookston defines the faculty-student relationship he calls developmental academic advising. It is important foundational reading for advisors and puts forward ideas from which anyone who teaches undergraduates can benefit.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1991). *How college affects students.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This book reviews recent pieces of research on how students change as a result of attending college. After an introductory chapter on the evolution of research about college outcomes and a chapter on major theoretical models of the effects of college on students, ten chapters are devoted to research on student change in the areas of subject matter competence, intellectual growth, personal identity, interpersonal relations, attitudes, values, moral development, educational attainment, career choice, economic achievement, and quality of life. The final chapter discusses the implications of research for policy and practice. The book includes an excellent reference section, making it easy to access specific studies on particular issues.

Simpson, R. D., & Frost S. H. (1993). Who goes to college and why? (Chapter 4). New paths to learning (Chapter 9). In *Inside college: Undergraduate education for the future.* New York: Insight Books.

In these chapters, Simpson and Frost discuss college student populations (including first-year students, minority groups, and underprepared students) and learning paths outside the classroom including academic advising relationships. The chapters provide important background for advisors and instructors of first-year students.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

This volume provides a new perspective on student attrition research based on theories of the institution's role in shaping students' social and intellectual development. It also explores ways to increase student retention according to the needs of students and colleges and universities. The first chapter focuses on problem-solving procedures that institutions can use to identify goals and decide how they can best deal with attrition. This is followed by two chapters that synthesize the results of attrition research. Chapter 4 presents a theory about why students leave school. The last two chapters discuss providing appropriate educational settings and the nature of institutional commitment as it relates to the educational mission, student retention, and educational excellence. An appendix presents the essential features of an effective retention assessment program.

*First-Year Students*

U.S. Department of Education. (1994). *Digest of educational statistics, 1994.* Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Educational Statistics.

This document, published annually, provides a compendium of statistics arrayed in more than 400 tables which cover the following topics: (a) all levels of education, (b) elementary and secondary education, (c) postsecondary education, (d) federal programs for education and related activities, (e) 50 outcomes of education, (f) international comparisons of education, and (g) learning resources and technology.

*American demographics.* Ithaca, NY: American Demographics Incorporated.

This monthly magazine is a publication of Dow Jones and Company. Targeted primarily to individuals engaged in marketing for business and industry, each issue provides four to five feature articles and four to six business reports. Many topics are directly related to educational issues, while others provide information which can assist educators in understanding issues, concerns, and trends which have an impact on educational institutions.

Howe, N., & Stauss, W. (1993). *13th Generation: Abort, retry, ignore, fail?* New York: Vintage Books.

Written in bits and "bytes," spliced with thought-provoking facts and quotes, and illustrated with cartoons and tables, this book provides an overview of the political, social, and economic factors which the authors believe have shaped the attitudes, opinions, and behavior of college students born in the 13th American generation (1961-1981).

*Learning Communities*

Gablenick, F., MacGregor, J., Matthews, R., & Smith, B. L. (1990). *Learning communities: Creating connections among students, faculty, and disciplines* (New Directions for Teaching and Learning, No. 41). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This is an excellent overview of learning communities by four pioneers in the field which includes chapters on the theoretical roots of learning communities, models, issues of implementation and sustainability, teaching in learning communities, and resources on learning communities.

Goodsell, A., Maher, M., Tinto, V., Smith, B. L., & MacGregor, J. (1992). *Collaborative learning: A sourcebook for higher education.* University Park, PA: National Center of Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment.

This sourcebook includes sections on the description and history of collaborative learning, implementation of learning communities, and assessment of learning communities. It contains reprints of seminal articles in the field, annotated bibliographies, and a list of "who's doing what where" in collaborative learning and learning communities.

Kadel, S., & Keehner, J. A. (1994). *Collaborative learning: A sourcebook for higher education* (Vol. 2). University Park, PA: National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment.

Volume 2 of this work contains reprinted articles about issues of practice in learning com-

munities and shares over 50 strategies for the classroom contributed by faculty members around the country representing a variety of disciplines and institutional types.

Tinto, V., Goodsell Love, A., & Russo, P. (1994). *Building learning communities for the new college student*. University Park, PA: The National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment.

Subtitled "A Summary of Research Findings of the Collaborative Learning Project," this monograph details the research methods and findings of research on learning communities at the University of Washington, Seattle Central Community College, and La Guardia Community College. It is available from: The National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment, 403 South Allen St. Suite 104, University Park, PA 16801-5252. (814) 865-5917.

*Organization of Academic Advising*

Barefoot, B., & Fidler, P. (1992). *1991 National survey of freshman seminar programming: Helping first-year college students climb the academic ladder* (Monograph No. 10). Columbia, SC: National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.

This monograph reviews the results of a national survey of institutions offering freshman seminar programs. Five types of seminars were defined, although they are seldom found to be mutually exclusive in practice. A description of these types is provided along with detailed quantitative data. The implications of this study for policy and practice are outlined as well as recommendations for further research.

Gardner J. N. (1981). Developing faculty as facilitators and mentors. In V. A. Harren (Ed.), *Facilitating students' career development* (New Directions for Student Services) (pp. 67-79). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Although written in 1980, this article still presents a valid model for training faculty to become mentors, a critical component of the most effective academic advising. Specifically, this article delineates the model developed at the University of South Carolina to prepare faculty to teach a freshman seminar and to equip them with many of the same skills used in academic advising.

Habley, W. R. (Ed.). (1988). *The status and future of academic advising: Problems and promise* (Research Report). Iowa City: American College Testing Program

The chapters in this publication take an in-depth look at topics that are critical to the success of advising programs in higher education. The first two chapters introduce the status of academic advising and present the findings of the 1987 National Survey of Academic Advising. Subsequent chapters discuss developmental advising, the organization of advising services, advising delivery systems, advisor training, and exemplary advising programs. The last chapter provides a list of 106 references, 64 of which are annotated.

King, M. (Ed.). (1993). *Academic advising: Organizing and delivering services for student success* (New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 82). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This volume is a compilation of essays regarding academic advising, particularly at community colleges. The essays address a wide range of issues: developmental advising, effects of academic advising on retention and transfer, the organization and effectiveness of academic advising in community colleges, delivery systems, and advisor training. Other essays review the evaluation, recognition, and rewards of academic advising; discuss considerations and strategies for advising two-year students; propose ways of advising multicultural students for achievement and success; and suggest intervention strategies at critical stages in a student's passage from enrollment to graduation. The volume concludes with annotated lists of resources and information.

Strommer, D. W. (Ed.). (1993). *Portals of entry: University colleges and undergraduate divisions* (Monograph No. 12). Columbia, SC:

National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.

This monograph offers seven case studies on university colleges and undergraduate divisions and their role in shaping the first-year college experience. Appendices contain the constitution of the Association of Deans and Directors of University Colleges and Undergraduate Studies, guidelines for oversubscribed programs, and sample mission statements and organizational charts.

*Training, Rewarding, and Recognizing Faculty Advisors*

Glennen, R. E. (1991, April). Intrusive advising: Innovative antidote for attrition. *Journal of Counseling and Human Service Professions, 5,* 34-41.

This article concentrates on the student attrition problem in higher education and presents a model utilizing intrusive advising which has increased student retention at Emporia State University. The model consists of a centralized advising center, the Student Advising Center (SAC), which features selected faculty representing various academic divisions on this campus. Faculty are carefully selected, trained, and provided release time to serve as advisors. The results include an increase in graduation rates, enrollment, and number of credit hours generated; a reduction in student attrition; and a decrease in the number of students requiring personal-psychological counseling. A systematized intrusive advising program and academic support service are key factors in any effort to combat rising attrition, declining enrollment, and decreased fiscal appropriations.

Kramer, H. C. (1987). *Incentives for advising.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED285445)

Motivations and incentives for advising are considered to help promote faculty members' sense of accomplishment and productivity. Intrinsic rewards and motivations are distinguished from extrinsic rewards for successful performance. A framework for viewing intrinsic rewards and motivations is considered that involves "possible selves" (i.e., views that faculty members have about their potential.) "Possible selves" are important because they function as incentives for future behavior and provide a context for current views of self. Ways that the incentives for advising might be increased for faculty are suggested. They include defining the goals and measures of performance in the advising program and holding faculty accountable for reasonable achievement, renegotiating priorities rather than adding new performance expectations; individualizing incentives, and allowing the advisor the freedom to choose when and how to use the reward. A model of job characteristics and employee attitudes is considered to clarify the intrinsic nature of the faculty members' work and the advising function. It is suggested that the value behind the advising role be addressed on campus and that faculty members be allowed to participate in management of the advising program.

Raney, M. W., & Hanson, G. R. (1993). Evaluating academic advising in a multiversity setting. *NACADA Journal, 13*(1), 34-42.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the advising system at a complex multiversity and provide answers to both summative and formative evaluation questions. The results suggest that most students (a) are advised, (b) feel that their advising needs have been met, and (c) are satisfied with the help they receive.

Stokes, J. P. (1992). Evaluation of a pilot program of faculty advising at an urban commuter university. *NACADA Journal, 12*(1), 28-33.

To evaluate a pilot program of faculty advising at a large, public, urban, commuter university, 448 pairs of entering students, both freshman and transfer students, were matched with various demographic and academic variables. One student from each pair was assigned a faculty advisor. Outcome variables include satisfaction with the university, perception of faculty, grade point average, and retention through the first year. The research design was compromised because of a low rate of participation by students assigned to an advisor. Results suggest that students who felt comfortable and re-

spected during the advising session left with more favorable attitudes towards the university and the faculty.

*The Undergraduate Experience*

Boyer, E. L. (1987). *College: The undergraduate experience in America.* New York: Harper & Row.

In 1984, a study of the undergraduate experience in American colleges was conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Observers visited 29 campuses representing a spectrum of colleges and universities. In addition, random sampling of chief academic officers, college and university faculty members, undergraduate students, high school counselors, and high school students was conducted. Eight problem areas were identified: (a) the disparity between secondary and collegiate education, (b) confusion within colleges and universities regarding their mission, (c) diverse obligations and conflicting faculty interests, (d) tension between creativity and conformity in the classroom, (e) discontinuity between academic and social campus life, (f) disagreement over the governing process, (g) measurements of the outcome and worth of an education, and (h) the often limited relationship between colleges and the outside world. This volume explores these problems as they relate to the undergraduate experience and offers recommendations for improvement.

Upcraft, M. L., & Gardner, J. N., (Eds.). (1990). *The freshman year experience: Helping students survive and succeed in college.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Following an introductory chapter that explores a comprehensive approach to enhancing freshman success, Part I of this volume focuses on the college experience of today's freshmen. Part II discusses essential programs and services for first-year students. Part III describes the origins, specific elements, and guidelines for beginning a freshman seminar program. Part IV focuses on the diversity of the first-year student population. The final section addresses the need for building campus support for a strong first-year program among all constituencies on campus.

**Orientation Programs**

Listed below are four institutions whose orientation programs were selected as exemplary by Eric White, Judith Goetz, M. Stuart Hunter, and Betsy Barefoot, authors of Chapter 3 of this monograph, "Creating Successful Transitions through Academic Advising." All four orientation programs address academic and student affairs issues. Academic considerations include sessions that provide information about specific majors and scheduling sessions with academic advisors. Academic assessments are used to assist with course placement. All programs use placement testing for English, math, and foreign languages. Some programs have students complete their own education surveys prior to reporting to campus. All programs have special sessions for student-athletes, honors students, and exploring students. The programs have special separate programs for family members. The programs also include sessions devoted to issues pertinent to campus life and institutional expectations of students, including multicultural issues, campus resources, campus safety, and the purpose of a college education.

*Indiana University*

Contact Rozelle Boyd, Director, University Division or Ginger Lawrence, Coordinator of Advising, University Division
Indiana University
Maxwell Hall 104
Bloomington, IN 47405
(812) 855-4964

*The Ohio State University*

Contact Fred Coggin, Assistant Dean
University College
The Ohio State University
Enarson Hall 110
154 W. 12th Ave.
Columbus, OH 43210
(614) 292-4161

*The Pennsylvania State University*

Judith J. Goetz, Senior Associate Director
Division of Undergraduate Studies

The Pennsylvania State University
221 Grange Building
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 865-7576

*University of Texas at Austin*

Alice G. Reinarz, Director
University Advising Center
The University of Texas at Austin
Flawn Academic Center, Rm. 1
P.O. Box 7908
Austin, TX 78713-7980
(512) 471-6550

**Academic Advising Practices**

The categories and materials selected for this section were influenced by the daily requests for information received by the National Clearinghouse for Academic Advising. The National Clearinghouse for Academic Advising is jointly operated by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and The Ohio State University. The National Clearinghouse's mission is to collect, create, and disseminate resources related to academic advising to members of NACADA at their request. The Clearinghouse attempts to meet this goal, primarily, by distributing annotated bibliographies that it has compiled on over 75 issues related to academic advising. The following categories are presented in this section: (a) annotated bibliographies of publications addressing topics of academic advising practice, (b) computer networks, (c) instruments and inventories that can be used in academic advising, (d) administrative software, and (e) career exploration and planning computer programs.

*Publications*

This category presents some of the publications and issues that have not been previously addressed. Several of these publications offer academic advisors good advise on some very practical issues.

Erickson, B. L., & Strommer D. W. (1991). *Teaching college freshmen*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This volume is divided into three distinct sections. The first presents a summary of current research on student development, learning styles, expectations, and other factors that have influenced first-year students. The second reviews the goals of freshman instruction as well as practical suggestions for implementing them. The third addresses special problems of teaching freshmen and offers practical solutions for reducing anonymity, increasing participation, developing basic reasoning and better writing skills.

Ford, J., & Ford S. S. (1993). Step-by-step guide to producing a comprehensive academic advising handbook. *NACADA, 13*, 50-51.

The authors outline the process of creating an advising handbook. They suggest questions to ask to customize such a publication for an individual campus and offer tips to increase user-friendliness.

Gordon, V. N. (1992). *Handbook of academic advising*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

The first two chapters of this book provide an overview of the history and roots of academic advising and then a detailed model of factors to consider when building an advising program. The following chapters address practically every conceivable advising issue and could easily serve as a working outline for an advising manual. Each chapter provides a summary and a list of references.

McKinley, C. D. (Ed.). *CAM reports: Career movement and management facts*. East Lansing, MI: Priam Publications.

This newsletter, available by subscription, compiles the most recent job and career information and trends. This valuable resource is published semi-monthly. To order, call (517) 351-2557.

Schein, H. K., Laff, N. S., & Allen, D. R. (1987). *Giving advice to students: A road map for college professionals*. Alexandria, VA: American College Personnel Association.

This monograph proposes using critical thinking skills as a basis for developmental advising

approaches that address decision making, resources, career planning, post-graduate studies, and counseling.

Srebnik, D. S. (1988). Academic advising evaluation: A review of assessment instruments. *NACADA, 3*, 52-61.

This article reviews student, advisor, and administrator surveys in terms of their length, content, format, and use. The importance of choosing evaluation instruments appropriate for specific assessment purposes is discussed.

*Computer networks*

Newsgroups provide academic advisors with immediate access to colleagues around the world. From these connections, information and insights are exchanged, ideas and topics are debated, and camaraderie is developed. Newsgroups are organized by issues or themes. For instance, the Academic Advising Network (ACADV) is a newsgroup in which many academic advisors are members. Its name reflects the focus of discussions on the network. Advisors can search for newsgroups on their own systems by using common words associated with advising, such as "careers," "counseling," or "jobs." The newsgroups below are a brief representative listing of ones that can provide an immediate and rich resource for every advisor.

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*Academic Advising Network (ACADV).* The ACADV was designed to enable academic advisors throughout the world to communicate with colleagues efficiently and economically. Network members freely give and receive assistance from colleagues.

Address: LISTSERV@vm1.nodak.edu ; or
LISTSERV@ndsuvm1.bitnet
Owner/Manager: Harold L. Caldwell,
OOhlcaldwell@bsuvc.bsu.edu

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*Enrollment Management Network(ENROLL-L).* This network is available to members of AACRAO (see "Professional Organizations") and provides a forum for discussion for registrar and admissions counselors.

Address: LISTSERV@vm1.spcs.umn.edu

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*Faculty Computing Support (FACSUP-L).* The FACSUP-L is devoted to supporting faculty efforts to use technology in their work. The focus is to provide a forum for faculty interested in self-training to use computers in teaching, research, and service.

Address: LISTSERV@ucnnvm.bitnet ; or
LISTSERV@uconnvm.edu
Owner/Manager: Ted Mills
tmills@ucnnvm.uconn.edu

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*JOBPLACE.* This list may be of interest to job search trainers, career educators, and researchers looking at job search issues, labor markets, and job placement. This network is not a place to look for job openings, but a list addressing the needs of those using self-help job search philosophy.

Address: JOBPLACE@ukcc.uky.edu (list)
LISTSERV@ukcc.uky.edu (listserv)
Owner/Manager: Drema Howard

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*Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA-L).* Vista On-Line is a bi-weekly electronic bulletin board featuring immediate assignment openings, program updates, and National Service news to career centers, volunteer offices, libraries, professional groups, and potential volunteers.

Address: VISTA-L@American.edu (list)
LISTSERV@American.edu (listserv)
Owner/Manager: John Zelon
73302.2504@compuserve.com

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*Instruments and inventories*

Instruments and inventories provide academic advisors with a valuable tool to discover more about our students when we work with them. Advisors need to be aware of special training or



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certification that is required to use some instruments or inventories.

*ACT Assessment College Report.* The American College Testing Program provides the information of the *College Report* to any institution of higher education for students who have taken the test. The report is available in paper copy, magnetic tape, or cartridge tape. The report includes several categories of information: scores and predictive data, self-reported high school information, special educational needs and interests, interest inventory related to the world of work, and admission/enrollment data (see "Academic Advising Support Organizations" for the address).

*Career Decision Making Instrument (CDM).* The Career Decision Making Instrument is a self-reporting and self-scoring interest inventory. Results of the interest scales are related to various career clusters. The theoretical work upon which the CDM is based are those of Dr. John Holland. The CDM can be used in individual or group sessions and can be administered in approximately 30 minutes. The CDM is published by American Guidance Service; 4201 Woodland Road; Circle Pines, MN 55014-1796.

*College Adjustment Scales (CAS).* This comprehensive screening instrument identifies problems frequently experienced by college students. It is primarily intended for use in college counseling and guidance centers. The CAS assesses nine areas of adjustment difficulties: anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, substance abuse, self-esteem problems, interpersonal problems, family problems, academic and career problems. CAS is suggested for students between the ages of 17-30 and can be administered in 15-20 minutes, either to individuals or groups. CAS can be order through Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. (see "Academic Advising Support Organizations" for the address).

*Johnson Decision Making Instrument (DMI).* Developed by researchers Johnson and Coscarelli, this instrument assesses how people approach the decision-making process. Helping students understand their style of decision making can make them better decision makers. The instrument on one scale, labeled information analysis, measures for internal or external preferences. A second scale, labeled information gathering, measures for spontaneous and systematic preferences. Preferences from each scale are combined to form a decision-making style. The DMI can be ordered by writing to Marathon Consulting and Press, Box 09189, Columbus, OH 43201.

*Self-Directed Search (SDS).* The SDS assesses career interests for high-school students, college students, and adults. The SDS helps individuals explore their interests and competencies while discovering careers and occupations that best match the characteristics of their own personality as defined by the Holland Code. Many different versions of the instrument are available to address special needs, age levels, and reading abilities. The instrument is available in different languages and in a software system edition with a site license version. The SDS can be ordered through Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. (see "Academic Advising Support Organizations" for the address).

*Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI).* The SSI consists of over 70 items that cover the full range of college experiences and is used to assist with campus-wide retention. Each item is expressed as a statement of expectation. Students are asked to indicate the level of importance they assign to the expectation as well as their level of satisfaction that the expectation is being met. The inventory findings are then presented as three scores for each item: an importance score, a satisfaction score, and a performance gap score. A large performance gap score on an item indicates the institution is not meeting the expectation; a small or zero gap score indicates the institution is meeting the expectation, and a negative score indicates the institution is exceeding the expectation. The instrument can be administered in approximately 20 minutes. The SSI can be ordered through Noel-Levitz (see "Academic Advising Support Organizations" for the address).

*Administrative Software*

Most advisors already use a wide variety of computer programs in their work. Word processing programs and data or financial spreadsheets are

easily adaptable to the administrative needs of academic advisors. The programs listed below are designed to assist with specific issues related to academic advising and to provide for an institutional management approach.

*Advisor Supplementary Student Evaluation Tool (ASSET).* The Advisor Supplementary Student Evaluation Tool (ASSET) is a software program created for the exclusive use and benefit of the health professions advisor. ASSET keeps biographical information on advisees, inventory control for letters of evaluation, test data, and matriculation information. The program can be ordered through NAAHP (see "Professional organizations" for the address).

*Computer-Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System (COMPASS).* The Computer-Adaptive Placement and Support System is developed by The American College Testing Program (ACT). COMPASS is a comprehensive software package to help postsecondary institutions place students in appropriate course levels. The system administers and scores adaptive tests, reports tests results, and manages test data. The system can administer a test to a student on demand. COMPASS can create summary reports or transmit results to a student information system. The COMPASS system is composed of tests in three subject areas: mathematics, reading, and writing skills. The program can be ordered through the American College Testing Program (see "Academic Advising Support Organizations" for the address).

*Career Exploration and Planning Computer Programs*

These computer programs offer accessible means for students to engage in self-assessment and career exploration. While these programs offer many positive characteristics, the yearly updating of career- and education-related information is one factor that cannot be overlooked.

*Discover.* Discover is a computer-based career planning program designed to help students and adults learn more about themselves and explore selections from over 450 occupations that may be compatible with their self-assessment. There are nine modules in the program which address specific issues related to a career search. These modules include the following: Beginning the Career Journey, Learning About the World of Work, Learning About Yourself, Finding Occupations, Learning About Occupations, Making Educational Choices, Planning Next Steps, Planning Your Career, and Making Transitions. There are different versions of Discover for DOS, Macintosh, Multimedia, and network capabilities. With multiple programs, Discover can be adapted for individual or group advising. Discover can be ordered through the American College Testing Program, (see "Academic Advising Support Organizations" for the address).

*Sigi Plus.* Sigi Plus is a career guidance computer program. It combines the unique capabilities of the computer with thoroughly researched information about occupations, values, interests, skills, educational programs and more. There are nine modules in the Sigi Plus program: Introduction, Self-Assessment, Search (for compatible careers), Information (about careers), Skills (required for different careers), Preparing, Coping, Deciding, and Next Steps. The program comes only in a DOS format, but there are local area and wide area network versions. Sigi Plus is distributed through Educational Testing Service (see "Academic Advising Support Organizations" for the address).

**Academic Advising Support Organizations**

Many of these selected academic advising support organizations have had their materials and resources mentioned elsewhere in this chapter. Their addresses are presented below for easier access.

American College Testing Program (ACT)
2201 N. Dodge Street
P.O. Box 168
Iowa City, IA 52243
Phone: (319) 337-1028
FAX: (319) 337-1059

Discover/ACT
2201 N. Dodge Street
P.O. Box 168

Iowa City, IA 52243
Phone: (319) 337-1000
FAX: (319) 337-1059

Educational Testing Service (ETS)
P.O. Box 6403
Princeton, NJ 08541-6403
Phone: (800) 257-7444
FAX: (609) 951-6240

Education-Related Information Center (ERIC)
Access ERIC
1600 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850
Phone: (800) 257-7444
FAX: (301) 251-5767

National Clearinghouse for Academic Advising
The Ohio State University
110 Enarson Hall
154 W. 12th Ave.
Columbus, OH 43210
Phone: (614) 292-6344
FAX: (614) 292-2124

National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition
University of South Carolina
1728 College Street
Columbia, SC 29208
Phone: (803) 777-6029
FAX: (803) 777-4699

Noel-Levitz
Noel-Levitz Office Park
2101 ACT Circle
Iowa City, IA 52245-9581
Phone: (319) 337-4700
FAX: (319) 337-5274

Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.
P.O. Box 998
Odessa, FL 33556
Phone: (800) 331-TEST
FAX: (800) 727-9329

### Professional Organizations

There are many professional organizations in higher education dedicated to the mission of developing, collecting, and disseminating materials and research pertinent to specific areas of educational interests and issues, as well as facilitating the professional involvement and development of their members. These listed below are a representative list of some of these professional organizations. For a more extensive listing, the Council for the Advancement of Academic Standards should be consulted.

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Council for the Advancement of Academic Standards (CAS)
2108 Mitchell Building
University of Maryland at College Park
College Park, MD 20742-5221
Phone: (301) 314-8428
FAX: (301) 314-9606

The Council for the Advancement of Academic Standards is a nonprofit consortium of 27 national and regional associations. CAS was established "to develop, disseminate, and promote professional standards and guidelines for the practice and preparation of student services and student development program professionals in higher education settings."

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American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (AACRAO)
One Dupont Circle N. W., Suite 330
Washington, DC 20036-1171
Phone: (202) 293-9161
FAX: (202) 872-8857

Founded in 1910, AACRAO is a nonprofit, voluntary, professional, educational association of degree-granting postsecondary institutions, government agencies and higher education coordinating boards, private educational organizations, and education-oriented businesses. Its goal is to promote higher education and further the professional development of members working in admissions, enrollment management, financial aid, institutional research, and registration. *College and University* is the professional journal of AACRAO. The national convention is held in April.

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American College Personnel Association (ACPA)
One Dupont Circle N.W., Suite 360-A
Washington, DC 20036-1110
Phone: (202) 835-ACPA
FAX: (202) 296-3286

The mission of the American College Personnel Association is to provide professional programs and services for educators who are committed to the overall development of students in postsecondary education. The *Journal of College Student Development* is the professional journal of ACPA. The national convention for ACPA is held in March.

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Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)
P.O. Box 21192
Columbus, OH 43221-0192
Phone: (614) 488-4972
FAX: (614) 488-1174

The Association of Higher Education and Disability is an international, multicultural organization of professionals committed to full participation in higher education. AHEAD offers numerous training programs, workshops, publications, and conferences. The *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability* is the professional journal of AHEAD. The national conference is usually held in late July.

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Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC)
600 Albert St. Suite 600
Ottawa, Canada K1R 1B1
Phone: (613) 563-1236
FAX: (613) 563-9745

Membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada is by university, each represented by its president. Associate members are national organizations representing administrative and academic interests within the university community. AUCC advances the interests of Canada's university community at the federal level and beyond, as well as offers a range of services to members, helping them meet their goals. *University Affairs* is Canada's news magazine on higher education and is published by AUCC.

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National Academic Advising Association (NACADA)
Kansas State University
2323 Anderson Ave.
Manhattan, KS 66502
Phone: (913) 532-5717
FAX: (913) 532-7732

The purpose of the National Academic Advising Association is to promote quality academic advising. To this end, NACADA is dedicated to the support and professional growth of academic advising and academic advisors. The *NACADA Journal* seeks to enrich the knowledge, skills, and professional development of people concerned with academic advising in higher education. The national convention for NACADA is held in October.

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National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics (N4A)
8402 Westover Dr.
Prospect, KY 40059
Phone: (502) 228-4053
FAX: (502) 228-5638

The mission of the National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics is to assist student-athletes in their pursuit of a viable education leading to graduation. The N4A publishes a biannual journal, *The Athletic Advisor*, which presents research reports related to athletics and academics in higher education. The N4A also hosts an annual convention in June.

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National Association of Academic Affairs Administrators (AcAfAd)
Gillum Hall, 201F
Indiana State University
Terre Haute, IN 47809
Phone: (812) 237-2700
FAX: (812) 237-7797

The National Association of Academic Affairs Administrators serves the "interests and needs

of persons responsible for the development, administration, and implementation of academic policies, programs, and services at institutions of higher education." The *AcAfAd Newsletter* is published three time a year. AcAfAd is Commission 14 of ACPA, however, AcAfAd annually conducts three regional conferences on its own. AcAfAd also conducts annual management development seminars for new assistant and associate academic deans in November of each year.

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National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP)
P.O. Box 1518
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Champaign, IL 61824
Phone: (217) 355-0063
FAX: (217) 355-1287

National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions is open to anyone actively involved in, or responsible for, the coordination, supervision, and practice of providing health care information to undergraduate students. *The Advisor* is the journal of NAAHP. The national convention is held bi-yearly, on even numbered years, during the month of June.

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National Orientation Directors Association (NODA)
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
412 Student Service Building
Knoxville, TN 37996
Phone: (615) 974-2435
FAX: (615) 947-0648

The National Orientation Directors Association is committed to "providing services related to new student programing in institutions of higher education." NODA views orientation "as an ongoing process and a multifaceted transition process which involves academic, intellectual, and personal development." NODA is an international organization comprised of professional administrators, students, faculty, and related organizations. *Orientation Review* is the journal of NODA. The national convention is held in October.

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National Center for Developmental Education
Appalachian State University
Boone, NC 28608
Phone: (704) 262-3057
FAX: (704) 262-2128

The mission of the National Center for Developmental Education is to provide resources for educators who work with underprepared adults in college and university settings. The National Center provides a variety of services which includes: people-to-people networks, materials collection, consulting and technical assistance, workshops, conferences, and symposia. The National Center provides an intensive summer training program followed by a practicum on the participants' home campuses. Those who complete the training are certified as "Developmental Education Specialists." The *Journal of Developmental Education* is published by the National Center.

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National Peer Helpers Association (NPHA)
P.O. Box 2684
Greenville, NC 27858
Phone: (919) 552-3959
FAX: (919) 552-3959

The mission of the National Peer Helper Association is to provide leadership and promote excellence in the peer resource field. The purpose of NPHA is to promote awareness of peer advising; to expand the network of those committed to peer advising in various roles; to connect resources that serve the leadership of peer advising programs; and to serve as a clearinghouse for resources for training, research, and consultation. The professional journal for NPHA is the *Peer Facilitator Quarterly*. The national conference for NPHA is held in June.

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# About the Authors

**Betsy Barefoot** is the Co-Director for Research and Publications in the National Center for The Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina. Dr. Barefoot has conducted research on freshman programs in higher education, and edits several publications, including the *Journal of the Freshman Year Experience* and The Freshman Year Experience Monograph Series. She has helped develop and design freshman seminars at several colleges and universities.

**Thomas Brown** is a graduate of the University of Southern California with a graduate degree from St. Mary's College of California. He is currently Dean of Advising Services and Special Programs at Saint Mary's College in California. He has published extensively on advising and multiculturalism and has presented several keynote addresses for various national organizations on connecting diversity with student advisement.

**Laura S. Confer** graduated in 1995 from Appalachian State University with a Master of Arts in Community Counseling from the Department of Human Development and Psychological Counseling. While a graduate student, she was a recipient of the Jones-Dotson Scholarship and completed a counseling internship as a Family Preservation Counselor.

**Elizabeth G. Creamer** is the Director of the Advising Center of the College of Arts and Sciences and Associate Professor in the College Student Affairs Program at Virginia Tech University. Dr. Creamer teaches undergraduate courses in women's studies and graduate courses in student affairs and higher education. She is the author of several publications and currently serves as the NACADA Newsletter editor.

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